



# Long-Range Plan (2023 through 2027) Whatcom Conservation District

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## Organization of the Whatcom Conservation District

Whatcom Conservation District (Whatcom CD) is a non-regulatory, political subdivision of the State of Washington authorized under [Chapter 89.08 RCW](#) and formed in 1946. Whatcom CD operates throughout the boundary of Whatcom County. A five-member Board of Supervisors governs Whatcom CD with three of the positions elected by the voters of Whatcom County and two appointed by the Washington State Conservation Commission ([WSCC Elections](#)). The Board sets policy and priorities, including this long-range plan, and receives input from community stakeholders and partners through monthly public meetings. A staff of 18 dedicated and skilled professionals administer operations and implement Board approved annual work plans and budgets aligned with this long-range plan.

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## Functional Context

Global: Earth is our home and its ability to support life depends on individual and collective efforts to conserve natural resources such as land, water, and air. We are temporary occupants and passing stewards of these natural resources. Failure to take care of our home for ourselves and for those who will follow is not an option, for we must have water, food, fiber, and energy to exist.

International: We share the Salish Sea, Fraser River Valley, and the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound International Airshed with our neighbors in British Columbia, Canada, the Lummi Nation, and the Nooksack Indian Tribe. We share many resource concerns, including nitrates in groundwater; pathogens, nutrients, and toxins (e.g., asbestos) in surface waters; stream flows; salmon recovery, sustainable agriculture; and air pollution. Collaboration with our international and tribal partners is essential to successful resource conservation.

Our State: We work within the following broad, legislatively defined goals associated with our funding from State of Washington sources.

- Support agriculture and forest managers to be the best stewards of our natural resources
- Improve water quality in streams, rivers, lakes, and the Salish Sea
- Improve air quality
- Reduce the amount of toxins released into the environment
- Maintain healthy fish and wildlife populations

Our District: In alignment with our global, international, state, and local contexts, we develop and implement programs to protect and conserve soil, water, air, prime and unique farmland, woodlands, native flora and fauna, and other natural resources. Whatcom CD activities also support the local food economy and can mediate land use conflicts.

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## **Vision**

We envision a thriving community that protects and benefits from clean and plentiful water, productive working lands, and resilient natural habitats.

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## **Mission**

To form partnerships with Whatcom County residents and entities to advance resiliency and ecological processes on working lands, residential landscapes, waterways, and open spaces for current and future generations.

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## **Values**

We are committed to the vitality of the ecosystem and every person in Whatcom County and value the following when orienting ourselves to our work:

- Serving all people of Whatcom County,
  - Respecting the needs and unique characteristics of our diverse community,
  - Building strategic partnerships to sustain healthy communities, working lands, natural habitats, and native flora and fauna,
  - Supporting agricultural land management and local food production,
  - Conserving the inter-relationships in the environment,
  - Carrying out our work with scientific and social integrity,
  - Investing in our staff,
  - Encouraging equitable and inclusive policies.
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## **Land Acknowledgement**

Whatcom CD respectfully acknowledges that the territory where we live and work are the ancestral homelands of the Coast Salish people, which includes the Lhaq'temish (Lummi Nation) and Nuxwsa'7aq (Nooksack Indian Tribe) and who are the original stewards of this land since time immemorial. There has been significant loss in natural and cultural resources since European settlement and we honor their work as guardians of what remains, we consider the legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together, and we commit to action and building lasting relationships to grow together so that all may prosper.

*Note – This Whatcom CD land acknowledgment is draft, and the Board of Supervisors intends to finalize the acknowledgment in collaboration with the Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian.*

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## **Critical Geographic Areas and Scope of Operations**

Whatcom CD conducts its work within the watersheds of Whatcom County to protect water quality, improve fish and wildlife habitat, and address local natural resource management priorities. Whatcom CD conducts its work based on stakeholder input at the local, regional, and state levels and in collaboration with partners to identify high-priority subareas within Whatcom County watersheds and to address shared priorities and

goals. A variety of land types and areas are the focus of Whatcom CD activities. Some of the land types and areas include the following.

- Agricultural lands
- Forested lands
- Freshwater habitats
- Marine habitats
- Other wildlife habitat types that support native flora and fauna
- Floodplains
- Critical aquifer recharge areas
- Erosion hazard areas
- Wildland Urban Interface areas
- Urban and residential areas

Whatcom CD programs and services are available to everyone within the boundary of Whatcom CD unless restricted to a geographic priority area by funding source.

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## **Natural Resource Priorities and Goals**

Local natural resource concerns and community needs inform the natural resource priorities in the Whatcom CD long-range plan. Priority resource concerns include water quality, water quantity, the long-term viability of local agriculture, soil health, forest health, and restoration of fish and wildlife habitat. Priority community needs include promoting local resiliency through carbon smart practices, reduced conversion of working lands, and a sustainable local food economy. Criteria used to identify the following natural resource priorities and goals include:

- Funding availability
- Collaborative solutions in consideration of local, regional, and state priorities and goals
- Use of local knowledge, diverse cultures, and scientific data to guide decisions, and
- Opportunities for partnerships and leveraging resources to address shared priorities and concerns

### *Climate Resiliency & Preparedness*

- Improve climate resiliency through carbon sequestration and carbon emissions reduction practices
- Promote forest health, integrity, and stewardship on Non-Industrial Private Forest lands
- Increase implementation of wildfire risk reduction practices
- Increase implementation of water use efficiency practices to address water management concerns
- Assist working land managers with preparing for and adapting to extreme weather events and changing climate conditions

### *Fish and Wildlife Habitat improvement*

- Improve riparian areas along fish-bearing streams and other waterways
- Increase access to fish habitat by removing fish passage barriers
- Improve in-stream fish habitat by installing habitat structures
- Restore and enhance upland habitat and wildlife corridors
- Restore and enhance wetland habitat and wildlife corridors

- Improve shellfish habitat

#### *Community Stormwater and Habitat Improvements*

- Implement green infrastructure programs/projects to improve stormwater quality and reduce stormwater runoff volumes
- Conduct education and outreach to build awareness and promote personal actions to prevent stormwater pollution

#### *Working Lands Productivity & Conservation*

- Increase implementation of water quality protection and soil health practices on working lands
- Promote, retain, and increase agricultural lands in viable agricultural production
- Conduct research and effectiveness monitoring to demonstrate and improve soil, water, and habitat conservation practices

#### *Community Agriculture & Local Food System*

- Collaborate with funders and technical partners to launch and deliver community agriculture and local food system programs and projects

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## **Information and Education Priorities and Goals**

Whatcom CD provides all Whatcom County residents an ecological understanding and place-based connection to the land, resources, and economy and promotes responsible stewardship and sustainable land management. Whatcom CD information and education activities work with adult and youth community members and focus on building knowledge, skills, and ability to act as stewards of our natural resources, habitats, and watersheds.

#### *Communications and Engagement*

- Develop and implement a Whatcom CD communications strategy and brand
- Foster collaboration on natural resources conservation across constituencies through commonality

#### *Adult, Youth, and Community-based Education*

- Utilize Community Based Social Marketing methods to increase the adoption of priority conservation behaviors
- Implement education programming to reach diverse audiences using age-appropriate messaging and a variety of engagement pathways

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## **Operations Priorities and Goals**

Whatcom CD identified the following priorities, goals, and actions as part of a strategic planning retreat in 2022 and as part of an organizational assessment conducted fall of 2021. (See Attachment 1 for details.)

#### *Administration & Operations*

- Attract, retain, and develop talented staff

- Maintain Whatcom CD facilities and capital equipment
- Continue to update key elements of Whatcom CD's administrative systems

### *Funding Development*

- Continue to develop Whatcom CD's funding structure and financial resources

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## **Trends that Impact Conservation in the Boundary of Whatcom CD**

- Population Growth - From 2011 – 2021 the population of Whatcom County has grown 11.9%, to 226,300 residents.
- Demographics and Economics – The average age of farmers continues to increase; there is increased societal focus on land use and sustainability, there continues to be movement toward “buy local” food sourcing, and there is an expansion in community/personal gardens and other “grow your own” foods efforts.
- Land Use – There is increasing conversion of working land to residential uses, and small acreage livestock keeping is on the rise.
- Water Quality - There are ongoing water body impairments, and shellfish harvest areas continue to experience bacteria-driven seasonal closures.
- Water Quantity – There are increasing demands on water availability water supplies, there are disincentives for water use efficiency in the agricultural sector, and demand is rising for residential water use wells.
- Regulatory Uncertainty – There are complex political and legal water rights issues; there is an increased potential for litigation over water quality, water quantity, and lack of fish habitat; there are increasing calls for regulatory oversight and intervention to achieve the goals of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), Clean Water Act (CWA), and Growth Management Act (GMA).
- Market Uncertainty – Uncertain commodity, fuel, and supply markets hamper long-term planning and investment in resource conservation practices.
- Land Stewardship – There is an increasing need for technical and financial assistance to improve land management practices. The demand for these services exceeds available funding.
- Climate Change – Increasing flood frequency and intensity, rising sea levels, shifting growing seasons, increasing summer temperatures and drought, decreasing winter snow accumulation, increasing impacts associated with plant and animal pathogens and diseases and infestations of invasive species are creating uncertainty for landowners/land managers and impacting their ability to steward natural resources.
- Funder Priorities – Grant funder priorities and initiatives can direct funded programs and services from local community priorities and needs.

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## **Strategies, Services, and Products to Address Trends**

Whatcom CD will utilize the principles and practices of voluntary stewardship programming along with a robust suite of partnerships to achieve the strategic goals outlined in this long-range plan. Whatcom CD will utilize the following strategies and offer the following service pathways over the next 5 years.

- We will continue providing educational opportunities, technical assistance, and financial incentives to residents and landowners/managers to promote sustainable natural resource management and help identify and implement best management practices.
- We will continue to facilitate environmental science and watershed education for youth audiences so that more youth experience high-quality environmental education and the outdoors and are prepared for future careers.
- We will continue to prioritize and emphasize partnerships with residents, community groups, non-governmental organizations, and governmental entities to make the greatest possible impact on resource conservation priorities with the most efficient use of public resources.
- We will enhance our Community-based Social Marketing strategies to promote priority conservation behaviors.
- We will identify and deliver services to historically underserved communities in Whatcom County.
- We will collaborate with our member jurisdictions to build environmental and natural resource management programming around shared priorities with mutually beneficial goals
- We continue to conduct research to demonstrate the effectiveness of conservation practices on the working lands in Whatcom County.
- We will expand current riparian restoration opportunities to increase the acres and miles of fish and wildlife habitat on Whatcom County waterways.

## Natural Resource Data

Whatcom CD conducted a survey and collated information, data, and best available science from federal, state, and local governmental and non-governmental sources to prepare this long-range plan. In addition to the data in the following tables, Attachment 2 includes a summary of responses from the Whatcom CD stakeholder engagement survey. Attachment 3 includes sources of information considered in the preparation of this long-range plan. Attachment 4 includes a summary of Whatcom County statistics from the USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service *2017 Census of Agriculture*.

## Staffing Needs

The following table summarizes current staffing by position and planned staffing to implement the priorities outlined in this long-range plan.

Position	Current Staffing	Planned Staffing
	Levels	Needs
District Manager	1 FTE	1 FTE
Accountant/Administrative Specialist	1 FTE	1 FTE
IT/GIS Specialist	1 FTE	1 FTE
Administrative Assistant	None	0.5 – 1 FTE
F&W Habitat Improvement Team Lead	1 FTE	1 FTE
CREP Planner Specialist	1 FTE	1 FTE
CREP & HIP Planner Specialist	1 FTE	1 FTE
Habitat Planner Technician	1 FTE, Temporary	Temporarily met
Communications, Engagement, & Education Team Lead	1 FTE	1 FTE
Education & Outreach Specialist	1 FTE	1 FTE
Education & Outreach Technician	1 FTE, Temporary	Temporarily met

Conservation Planning Team Lead	1 FTE	1 FTE
Farm Planner Resource Specialist	1 FTE	1 FTE
Farm Planner Resource Specialist	1 FTE	1 FTE
Conservation Planner Resource Technician	None	1 FTE
Water Quality Data Coordinator	1 FTE	1 FTE
Conservation Research Specialist	1 FTE	1 FTE
Engineering – Agriculture and Habitat Engineer	None	1 FTE
Engineering – Area Engineer	1 FTE, shared	Need met, Shared
HIP/NNLP Coordinator	1 FTE	1 FTE
Climate Resilience – Community Wildfire Resilience Specialist	1 FTE	1 FTE
Climate Resilience – Forest Stewardship Planner	None	0.5 – 1 FTE
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18 FTEs</b>	<b>21 – 22 FTEs</b>

## Annual Budget Needs

The Whatcom CD five-year projected budget and estimated net income analysis assumes flat revenue and expenses based on the Whatcom CD approved State Fiscal Year 2023 Operating Budget with an annual 1.25% COLA adjustment and a 2.5% CPI increase on other expenses.

5-Year Projected Budget	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026</u>	<u>2027</u>
Revenue					
Grants & Contracts	2,500,000.00	2,500,000.00	2,500,000.00	2,500,000.00	2,500,000.00
Rates & Charges	450,000.00	450,000.00	450,000.00	450,000.00	450,000.00
Cost-share ( <i>Pass Through</i> )	<u>1,000,000.00</u>	<u>1,000,000.00</u>	<u>1,000,000.00</u>	<u>1,000,000.00</u>	<u>1,000,000.00</u>
Total Revenue	3,950,000.00	3,950,000.00	3,950,000.00	3,950,000.00	3,950,000.00
Expenses					
Salaries & Benefits	1,828,820.55	1,851,680.81	1,874,826.82	1,898,262.15	1,921,990.43
Contracted Services	400,000.00	410,000.00	420,250.00	430,756.25	441,525.16
Cost-share	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00
Other Costs	<u>581,424.55</u>	<u>595,960.16</u>	<u>610,859.17</u>	<u>626,130.65</u>	<u>641,783.91</u>
Total Expenses	<u>3,810,245.10</u>	<u>3,857,640.97</u>	<u>3,905,935.99</u>	<u>3,955,149.05</u>	<u>4,005,299.50</u>
Net Income	139,754.90	92,359.03	44,064.01	(5,149.05)	(55,299.50)
5-Year Projected Ending Balance					
Beginning Balance	-	139,754.90	232,113.93	276,177.95	271,028.89
Net Income	<u>139,754.90</u>	<u>92,359.03</u>	<u>44,064.01</u>	<u>(5,149.05)</u>	<u>(55,299.50)</u>
Ending Balance	139,754.90	232,113.93	276,177.95	271,028.89	215,729.40

## Key Decision Makers

The Whatcom CD Board of Supervisors is the key decision-making body needed to carry out this long-range plan. The Whatcom CD web page highlights the five members of the Board of Supervisors [here](#). The Board also works in collaboration with other key decision-makers, including:

- Whatcom County Council
  - City councils of Bellingham, Blaine, Everson, Ferndale, Lynden, Nooksack, and Sumas
  - Lummi Nation
  - Nooksack Indian Tribe
  - Federal partners such as the Natural Resources Conservation Services and Farm Services Agency
  - Other governmental entities such as Department of Natural Resources, Department of Ecology, Whatcom Water Alliance, Whatcom Clean Water Program, school districts, watershed improvement districts, shellfish protection districts, water and sewer districts, and fire districts
  - Non-governmental organizations such as Whatcom Family Farmers, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association, Whatcom Land Trust, Whatcom Million Trees, ReSources, Wild Whatcom, Garden of the Salish Sea, Whatcom Chapter of the Backcountry Horsemen of Washington, Whatcom County Cattlemen's Association, Whatcom Coalition of Environmental Educators
  - Residents, land managers, and landowners in Whatcom County
  - State and federal policymakers – Washington State Legislative Districts 40 and 42, and Federal Congressional District 2
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**Benchmarks, Timeline, and Actions**

The following section outlines 5-year measures for the strategic actions associated with Whatcom CD’s natural resource, information & education, and operations priorities and goals. Whatcom CD implements strategic actions through annual work plans and budgets, and these priorities and goals are dependent upon Board approved funding. These annual plans are available on the Whatcom CD web page [here](#).

Natural Resource Priorities, Goals, Desired Outcomes, and Measures of Success

*Climate Resiliency & Preparedness*

Goal 1: Improve climate resiliency through carbon sequestration and carbon emissions reduction practices

Desired Outcome: Improved soil carbon sequestration on croplands and reduced carbon emissions from farm operations

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Initiate a Sustainable Farms and Field (SFF) funded cover cropping program	Secure funding for a pilot cover crop cost-share program	Evaluate pilot program and adapt, plant 10 acres of cover crop	Award \$5,000 in cost-share to implement cover crops	Award \$5,000 in cost-share to implement cover crops	Award \$5,000 in cost-share to implement cover crops
2. Provide education, technical assistance, and financial resources to increase the use of cover cropping practices	Secure funding from SFF to provide technical assistance (TA) on cover crops	Secure funding from SFF to provide TA on cover crops	Secure funding from SFF to provide TA on cover crops	Secure funding from SFF to provide TA on cover crops	Secure funding from SFF to provide TA on cover crops
3. Secure funding to implement COMET-farm planning services	Secure funding for a pilot program for complete 3 COMET-Farm assessments	Provide education, technical assistance, and financial resources to improve on-farm management of carbon sources	Provide education, technical assistance, and financial resources to improve on-farm management of carbon sources	Provide education, technical assistance, and financial resources to improve on-farm management of carbon sources	Provide education, technical assistance, and financial resources to improve on-farm management of carbon sources
4. Implement energy audit programs to identify energy conservation opportunities on farms	Refer 10 farmers to local energy conservation programs	Refer 10 farmers to local energy conservation programs	Refer 10 farmers to local energy conservation programs	Refer 10 farmers to local energy conservation programs	Refer 10 farmers to local energy conservation programs

Goal 2: Promote forest health, integrity, and stewardship on Non-Industrial Private Forest (NIPF) lands

Desired Outcome: Reduced conversion of NIPF lands to other uses

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Secure funding to implement a forest stewardship (FS) program	Participate in WA State Conservation Commission (WSCC) initiative to fund FS programming in partnership with WA Department of Natural Resources (DNR); Participate in Puget Sound Conservation Districts (PSCD) Caucus Regional Forestry Program funding efforts	Continue to participate in WSCC initiative to fund FS programming in partnership with WA DNR; Participate in PSCD Caucus Regional Forestry Program funding efforts	Continue to coordinate with WSCC, WA DNR, and PSCD Caucus	Continue to coordinate with WSCC, WA DNR, and PSCD Caucus	Continue to coordinate with WSCC, WA DNR, and PSCD Caucus

2. Promote forest retention and increase tree and forest canopy cover through communications and education	-		Hire/Contract Forest Stewardship (FS) Planner; Build program resources, tools, templates; Launch FS Program	Prepare 20 FS Plans, Connect 2 landowners with financial assistance (FA), Connect 2 landowners with current use and/or easement programs	Prepare 20 FS Plans, Connect 2 landowners with FA, Connect 2 landowners with current use and/or easement programs	Prepare 20 FS Plans, Connect 2 landowners with FA, Connect 2 landowners with current use and/or easement programs
3. Conduct forest stewardship trainings, tours, and events in partnership with local and regional stakeholders	-	-		Coordinate with WA State University (WSU) Forest Stewardship on planning and implementing Forest Field Days, Twilight Tours, etc.	Coordinate with WSU Forest Stewardship on planning and implementing Forest Field Days, Twilight Tours, etc.	Coordinate with WSU Forest Stewardship on planning and implementing Forest Field Days, Twilight Tours, etc.
4. Provide incentives to implement forest stewardship practices	-	-		Connect 2 landowners/land managers (LO/LM) with federal, state, or local FA	Connect 2 LO/LM with federal, state, or local FA	Connect 2 LO/LM with federal, state, or local FA
5. Facilitate NIPF landowner/land manager enrollment in current use and/or easement programs	-	-		Connect 2 LO/LM with current use and/or easement programs	Connect 2 LO/LM with current use and/or easement programs	Connect 2 LO/LM with current use and/or easement programs

Goal 3: Increase implementation of wildfire risk reduction practices

Desired Outcome: Reduced wildfire-associated losses (acres and structures) in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Promote fire resiliency (and associated benefits) through direct marketing and partnerships	5 community presentations	Increase number reached	Increase number reached	Increase number reached	Increase number reached
2. Provide fire risk management services through marketing, direct services, and partnerships	30 individual wildfire risk assessments, evaluation methodology created to determine implementation of recommendations	Increase number of assessments, Develop and implement evaluation and assessment tool	Increase number of assessments, refine program based on evaluation	Increase number of assessments, Increase implementation of recommendations	Increase number of assessments, Increase implementation of recommendations
3. Conduct community risk management trainings and fuels reduction events, including community chipping events	3 communities receiving risk reduction training and assistance, 5 fuels reduction projects	Increase number of communities and projects	Increase number of communities and projects	Increase number of communities and projects	Increase number of communities and projects

4. Increase delivery of fire resiliency services in the WUI	Secure local/state/federal funding	Secure local/state/federal funding	Secure local/state/federal funding	Secure local/state/federal funding	Secure local/state/federal funding
5. Work with audiences in underserved/not yet-served communities	Mapping of current audiences served and build comprehensive understanding of all audiences	Plan outreach and engagement program to reach underserve audiences	Implement outreach and engagement program to reach underserved audiences	Number of new audiences served	Number of new audiences served

Goal 4: Increase implementation of water use efficiency practices to address water management concerns

Desired Outcome: Increased water use efficiency on residential properties, working lands, and commercial operations

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Promote water use efficiency and associated benefits to increase the number of individuals and entities adopting water use efficiency practices	100 residents installing water use efficiency (WUE) appliances, 10 members involved in Whatcom Water Alliance (WWA), 300 students involved in WUE education, assessment tool created to determine adoption of practices not in our rebate program	Increase number of residents installing WUE appliances, increase number of WWA members, increase number of students reached, Develop and implement evaluation and assessment tool	refine strategies based on evaluation	refine strategies based on evaluation	refine strategies based on evaluation
2. Provide incentives to increase the implementation of water conservation practices	100 Residential WUE rebates administered per year	100 Residential WUE rebates administered per year, new incentive program analysis and proposal drafted	Refine based on program analysis, increase number of WUE practices funded through incentives	Refine based on program analysis, increase number of WUE practices funded through incentives	Refine based on program analysis, increase number of WUE practices funded through incentives

Goal 5: Assist working land managers with preparing for and adapting to extreme weather events and changing climate conditions

Desired Outcome: Improved recovery time on working lands following extreme weather impacts

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Provide technical and financial incentives to working land managers to implement practices that improve extreme weather event resiliency	Update 5 farm plans to address extreme weather events	Refine based program analysis and need	Refine based program analysis and need	Refine based program analysis and need	Refine based program analysis and need
2. Mobilize technical and financial resources to respond to extreme weather-related impacts	Provide technical assistance to connect clients with disaster response programs	Refine strategies based on evaluation and need	Refine strategies based on evaluation and need	Refine strategies based on evaluation and need	Refine strategies based on evaluation and need

*Fish and Wildlife Habitat improvement*

Goal 1: Improve riparian areas along fish-bearing streams and other waterways

Desired Outcome: Improved productivity of fish habitat and improved water quality

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Secure funding to plant and maintain riparian areas	Secure \$500,000 in funding for riparian planting	Secure \$500,000 in funding for riparian planting	Secure \$500,000 in funding for riparian planting	Secure \$500,000 in funding for riparian planting	Secure \$500,000 in funding for riparian planting
2. Plant and maintain riparian buffers on commercial farmland	Plant 20 acres of riparian buffer on commercial farmland	Plant 20 acres of riparian buffer on commercial farmland	Plant 20 acres of riparian buffer on commercial farmland	Plant 20 acres of riparian buffer on commercial farmland	Plant 20 acres of riparian buffer on commercial farmland
3. Plant and maintain riparian areas on rural residential, commercial, and other lands	Plant 20 acres of riparian buffer on rural, commercial and other lands	Plant 20 acres of riparian buffer on rural, commercial and other lands	Plant 20 acres of riparian buffer on rural, commercial and other lands	Plant 20 acres of riparian buffer on rural, commercial and other lands	Plant 20 acres of riparian buffer on rural, commercial and other lands

Goal 2: Increase access to fish habitat by removing fish passage barriers

Desired Outcome: Restored access to quality and productive upstream habitat

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Secure funding to remove fish passage barriers on private and public lands	Secure \$300,000 in funding for barrier removal	Secure \$300,000 in funding for barrier removal	Secure \$300,000 in funding for barrier removal	Secure \$300,000 in funding for barrier removal	Secure \$300,000 in funding for barrier removal
2. Plan, design, and construct fish passage barrier projects	Restore access to 4 miles of upstream fish habitat	Restore access to 4 miles of upstream fish habitat	Restore access to 4 miles of upstream fish habitat	Restore access to 4 miles of upstream fish habitat	Restore access to 4 miles of upstream fish habitat

Goal 3: Improve in-stream fish habitat by installing habitat structures

Desired Outcome: Healthier and more productive freshwater fish habitat

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Support tribal efforts to improve in-stream habitat in the upper forks of the Nooksack River	Provide technical and outreach support for two tribal in-stream habitat projects	Provide technical and outreach support for two tribal in-stream habitat projects	Provide technical and outreach support for two tribal in-stream habitat projects	Provide technical and outreach support for two tribal in-stream habitat projects	Provide technical and outreach support for two tribal in-stream habitat projects
2. Plan, design, and construct in-stream habitat projects associated with fish passage and riparian projects	Improve 300' of stream habitat with large wood installation	Improve 300' of stream habitat with large wood installation	Improve 300' of stream habitat with large wood installation	Improve 300' of stream habitat with large wood installation	Improve 300' of stream habitat with large wood installation

Goal 4: Restore and enhance upland habitat connectivity

Desired Outcome: Stabilized plant and wildlife populations

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
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1. Secure funding and partners to enhance upland habitat connectivity	Secure \$50,000 to enhance upland habitat	Secure \$50,000 to enhance upland habitat	Secure \$50,000 to enhance upland habitat	Secure \$50,000 to enhance upland habitat	Secure \$50,000 to enhance upland habitat
2. Install native plantings in hedgerows and pollinator gardens on rural and urban landscapes	Plant 5 acres of upland habitat	Plant 5 acres of upland habitat	Plant 5 acres of upland habitat	Plant 5 acres of upland habitat	Plant 5 acres of upland habitat

Goal 5: Restore and enhance wetland habitat connectivity

Desired Outcome: Stabilized plant and wildlife populations

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Secure funding and partners to enhance wetland habitat	Secure \$50,000 to enhance wetland habitat	Secure \$50,000 to enhance wetland habitat	Secure \$50,000 to enhance wetland habitat	Secure \$50,000 to enhance wetland habitat	Secure \$50,000 to enhance wetland habitat
2. Plan, design, and plant wetland habitat enhancement projects	Plant 5 acres to enhance wetland habitat	Plant 5 acres to enhance wetland habitat	Plant 5 acres to enhance wetland habitat	Plant 5 acres to enhance wetland habitat	Plant 5 acres to enhance wetland habitat

Goal 6: Improve shellfish habitat

Desired Outcome: Improved productivity of shellfish harvesting areas

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Secure funding to assist Tribal efforts to improve substrate in shellfish growing areas	Secure funding for Tribal shellfish bed substrate improvements	Secure funding for Tribal shellfish bed substrate improvements	Secure funding for Tribal shellfish bed substrate improvements	Secure funding for Tribal shellfish bed substrate improvements	Secure funding for Tribal shellfish bed substrate improvements
2. Secure funding to assist Tribal efforts to improve tide gates and other infrastructure in shellfish growing areas	Secure funding for Tribal aquaculture structural improvements	Secure funding for Tribal aquaculture structural improvements	Secure funding for Tribal aquaculture structural improvements	Secure funding for Tribal aquaculture structural improvements	Secure funding for Tribal aquaculture structural improvements

*Community Stormwater and Habitat Improvements*

Goal 1: Implement green infrastructure programs/projects to improve stormwater quality and reduce stormwater runoff volumes

Desired Outcome: Reduced stormwater pollution and volumes

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Plan and install stormwater practices to manage runoff through increased infiltration and improved retention	5-10 stormwater retention structures planned through Lake Whatcom Homeowner Incentive Program	Evaluate current funding and partnership	Secure local/state/federal funding	Secure local/state/federal funding	Secure local/state/federal funding

2. Plan and install native landscaping practices, including working land and residential tree canopy enhancement	50,000 sq. ft. of native landscaping installed through existing Neighborhood Native Landscaping Program (NNLP) contracts; Conduct analysis on feasibility of expanding NNLP	Increase geographic scope of program, increase square footage landscaped areas	Increase geographic scope of program, increase square footage landscaped areas	Increase geographic scope of program, increase square footage landscaped areas	Increase geographic scope of program, increase square footage landscaped areas
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Goal 2: Conduct education and outreach to build awareness and promote personal actions to prevent stormwater pollution

Desired Outcome: Increased adult and youth awareness of stormwater pollution and runoff prevention measures

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Promote public involvement and participation in stormwater activities	Continue focus in Birch Bay, Lake Whatcom, and City of Lynden	Continue focus in Birch Bay, Lake Whatcom, and City of Lynden; Feasibility analysis for expansion into other NPDES areas of Whatcom County	Increase geographic scope of program, increase square footage landscaped areas	Increase geographic scope of program, increase square footage landscaped areas	Increase geographic scope of program, increase square footage landscaped areas
2. Deliver youth education curricula focused on stormwater	1000 students reached	Expand school based initiatives to underserved school districts; Feasibility analysis for expansion into other NPDES areas of Whatcom County	Increase number of students reached	Increase number of students reached	Increase number of students reached
3. Conduct education and outreach multimedia campaigns	Monthly social media and e-newsletter content, updated website content	Monthly social media and e-newsletter content, updated website content	Monthly social media and e-newsletter content, updated website content	Monthly social media and e-newsletter content, updated website content	Monthly social media and e-newsletter content, updated website content

*Working Lands Productivity & Conservation*

Goal 1: Increase implementation of water quality protection and soil health practices on working lands

Desired Outcome: Reduced water pollution loads in waterways, improved soil health and fertility on working lands, & extended shellfish harvest windows

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Provide educational, technical, and financial resources to reduce nutrients, pathogens, sediment, and toxics entering waterways	Develop 100 farm plans	Develop 100 farm plans	Develop 100 farm plans	Develop 100 farm plans	Develop 100 farm plans
2. Implement water quality protection and enhancement practices	Award \$100,000 in cost-share to implement 5 practices	Award \$100,000 in cost-share to implement 5 practices	Award \$100,000 in cost-share to implement 5 practices	Award \$100,000 in cost-share to implement 5 practices	Award \$100,000 in cost-share to implement 5 practices

3. Implement manure management practices to improve water quality and soil health	15 landowners/land managers (LO/LM) rent the Whatcom CD (WCD) manure spreader	15 LO/LM rent the WCD manure spreader	15 LO/LM rent the WCD manure spreader	15 LO/LM rent the WCD manure spreader	15 LO/LM rent the WCD manure spreader
4. Conduct soil testing to improve water quality and soil health	Support 10 LO/LM with soil sampling, testing, and analysis interpretation	Support 10 LO/LM with soil sampling, testing, and analysis interpretation	Support 10 LO/LM with soil sampling, testing, and analysis interpretation	Support 10 LO/LM with soil sampling, testing, and analysis interpretation	Support 10 LO/LM with soil sampling, testing, and analysis interpretation
5. Facilitate and coordinate county-wide water quality data collection program (data analyses, reporting, and web portal management)	Rebuild database and visualization of water quality. Update of water quality map and report results of countywide water quality	Update of water quality map and report results of countywide water quality	Update of water quality map and report results of countywide water quality	Update of water quality map and report results of countywide water quality	Update of water quality map and report results of countywide water quality
6. Use county-wide water quality data to identify and prioritize geographic areas for conservation work	Convene a work group to interpret data and confirm priority geographies	Implement work group recommendations	Implement work group recommendations	Implement work group recommendations	Implement work group recommendations

Goal 2: Promote, retain, and increase agricultural lands in viable agricultural production

Desired Outcome: Reduced conversion of agricultural lands to other uses

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Assist agricultural landowners/land managers with accessing farm bill programs and services	2 landowners/land managers (LO/LM) connected to partner programs	2 LO/LM connected to partner programs	2 LO/LM connected to partner programs	2 LO/LM connected to partner programs	2 LO/LM connected to partner programs
2. Assist agricultural landowners/land managers with accessing current use, conservation easement, and TDR programs	2 LO/LM connected to partner programs	2 LO/LM connected to partner programs	2 LO/LM connected to partner programs	2 LO/LM connected to partner programs	2 LO/LM connected to partner programs
3. Prepare farm plans for properties seeking access to the Whatcom County Conservation Easement Program	Write 2 farm plans per year for our local Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program	Write 2 farm plans per year for our local PDR program	Write 2 farm plans per year for our local PDR program	Write 2 farm plans per year for our local PDR program	Write 2 farm plans per year for our local PDR program
4. Support succession planning training and new farmer training	Collaborate with and support Sustainable Connections (SC) and WA State University (WSU) Extension-aligned trainings	Collaborate with and support Sustainable Connections and WSU Extension-aligned trainings	Collaborate with and support Sustainable Connections and WSU Extension-aligned trainings	Collaborate with and support Sustainable Connections and WSU Extension-aligned trainings	Collaborate with and support Sustainable Connections and WSU Extension-aligned trainings

Goal 3: Conduct research and effectiveness monitoring to demonstrate and improve soil, water, and habitat conservation practices

Desired Outcome: Demonstrated effectiveness of core conservation practices

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Conduct environmental research projects to test and document the effectiveness of core conservation practices	Evaluate effectiveness of best management practices on three Edge of Field (EoF) monitoring sites	Secure funding for a new 6-year EoF monitoring project	Implement current research projects; Evaluate research and adaptively manage; Secure funding for new and ongoing Best Management Practices (BMP) effectiveness monitoring based on evaluation	Implement current research projects; Evaluate research and adaptively manage; Secure funding for new and ongoing BMP effectiveness monitoring based on evaluation	Implement current research projects; Evaluate research and adaptively manage; Secure funding for new and ongoing BMP effectiveness monitoring based on evaluation
2. Conduct research to explore new and innovative technologies that benefit conservation farming practices	Implement research on irrigation and manure storage practices	Continue to implement research on irrigation and manure storage practices; Evaluate research and adaptively manage; Secure funding for additional research projects	Continue to implement research on irrigation and manure storage practices; Evaluate research and adaptively manage; Secure funding for additional research projects	Continue to implement research on irrigation and manure storage practices; Evaluate research and adaptively manage; Secure funding for additional research projects	Continue to implement research on irrigation and manure storage practices; Evaluate research and adaptively manage; Secure funding for additional research projects

*Community Agriculture & Local Food System*

Goal 1: Collaborate with funders and technical partners to launch and deliver community agriculture and local food system programs and projects

Desired Outcome: Increased awareness and access of programs that benefit community agriculture and local food systems; Increased viability of Whatcom County's agriculture community and local food system

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Secure funding to implement community agriculture and local food system-aligned actions	Secure funding to implement community agriculture and local food system-aligned actions	Secure funding to implement community agriculture and local food system-aligned actions	Secure funding to implement community agriculture and local food system-aligned actions	Secure funding to implement community agriculture and local food system-aligned actions	Secure funding to implement community agriculture and local food system-aligned actions
2. Collaborate with Natural Resources Conservation Service to fund urban agriculture practices on residential properties	2 residential properties connected to partner programs	2 residential properties connected to partner programs	2 residential properties connected to partner programs	2 residential properties connected to partner programs	2 residential properties connected to partner programs
3. Collaborate with the Whatcom County (WC) Food Policy Steering Committee on implementing WC Food System Action Plan elements	Seek funding to implement Whatcom CD (WCD) actions included in the Plan.	Seek funding to implement Whatcom CD (WCD) actions included in the Plan.	Seek funding to implement Whatcom CD (WCD) actions included in the Plan.	Seek funding to implement Whatcom CD (WCD) actions included in the Plan.	Seek funding to implement Whatcom CD (WCD) actions included in the Plan.

4. Collaborate with the Whatcom Food Network (WFN)	Attend quarterly Whatcom Food Network (WFN) meetings and support farmer networking.	Attend quarterly Whatcom Food Network (WFN) meetings and support farmer networking.	Attend quarterly Whatcom Food Network (WFN) meetings and support farmer networking.	Attend quarterly Whatcom Food Network (WFN) meetings and support farmer networking.	Attend quarterly Whatcom Food Network (WFN) meetings and support farmer networking.
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Information & Education Priorities, Goals, Desired Outcomes, and Measures of Success

*Communications and Engagement*

Goal 1: Develop and implement a Whatcom CD communications strategy and brand

Desired Outcome: Increased awareness of Whatcom CD programs and services

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Advance the Whatcom CD's core mission by improving awareness/knowledge of and participation in Whatcom CD programs and services	Increase number of new e-newsletter subscribers, event participants, and social media followers	Increase number of new e-newsletter subscribers, event participants, and social media followers	Increase number of new e-newsletter subscribers, event participants, and social media followers	Increase number of new e-newsletter subscribers, event participants, and social media followers	Increase number of new e-newsletter subscribers, event participants, and social media followers
2. Build and implement the Whatcom CD's brand (includes new logo, style guide, etc.)	Develop brand and style guidance; Integrate Vision, Mission, Values, Land Acknowledgment with website and all communications	Utilize updated brand and style guidelines on new and ongoing communications and collateral	Utilize updated brand and style guidelines on new and ongoing communications and collateral	Utilize updated brand and style guidelines on new and ongoing communications and collateral	Utilize updated brand and style guidelines on new and ongoing communications and collateral

Goal 2: Foster collaboration on natural resources conservation across constituencies through commonality

Desired Outcome: Increased capacity and engagement of Whatcom CD programs and services

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Develop a comprehensive understanding of community values and commonalities	Secure funding for robust assessment and implementation; Build partnerships for co-creation of assessment	Research and develop assessment methodology	Implement broad-scale community assessment	Implement broad-scale community assessment	Refine and report on results
2. Provide in-person opportunities to connect with our community and raise awareness of Whatcom CD services	Number of tours and public events	Number of tours and public events	Number of tours and public events	Number of tours and public events	Number of tours and public events
3. Align program priorities and messaging based to include all stakeholder input	Define current program priorities and common messaging	Evaluate program by client/stakeholder feedback	Refine based on results	Refine based on results	Refine based on results
4. Communicate to the public and partners in measurable outcomes and accomplishments	Build structure for Annual reporting and Annual meetings	Implement structure for Annual reporting and Annual meetings	Implement and refine	Implement and refine	Implement and refine

5. Develop and nurture strategic partnerships to further the Whatcom CD's mission and address Whatcom CD priorities	Develop engagement strategy for strategic partnerships	Implement engagement strategy and create evaluation methodology	Implement and refine	Implement and refine	Implement and refine
6. Identify opportunities for joint events, projects, and funding where there is cross-organization alignment in priorities	Develop comprehensive list of engagement opportunities, timeline for active participation	Participation and collaboration with target groups	Number shared events and messaging; Structured collaboration	Implement and refine	Implement and refine
7. Explore the formation of an advisory group	-	Initiate exploration of concept	Continue to explore concept and opportunities	Implement or adaptively manage based on results	Continue to implement or adaptively manage based on results

*Adult, Youth, and Community-based Education*

Goal 1: Utilize Community Based Social Marketing (CBMS) methods to increase the adoption of priority conservation behaviors

Desired Outcome: Increased knowledge and practice of core conservation priorities

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Continue to utilize and develop new CBSM strategies to increase the adoption of behaviors	Continue and enhance existing CBSM initiatives, build priority behaviors for future CBSM actions and select target behaviors	Identify barrier and conduct benefit research	Develop engagement strategy	Implement pilot strategy	Conduct broad-scale implementation of pilot strategy
2. Develop and implement an evaluation strategy to evaluate ongoing and new CBSM initiatives	-	-	Develop evaluation strategy	Implement evaluation strategy	Conduct broad-scale evaluation of pilot strategy

Goal 2: Implement education programming to reach diverse audiences using age-appropriate messaging and a variety of engagement pathways

Desired Outcome: Increased knowledge and practice of core conservation priorities

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Develop Whatcom CD education curricula/learning plans	Continue and enhance engagement with Puget Sound Conservation Districts Caucus, WA State Conservation Commission (WSCC) Communications Partnerships and Outreach Committee, and WSCC Education Committee	Number of youth and adult curricula elements	Number of youth and adult curricula elements	Number of youth and adult curricula elements	Number of youth and adult curricula elements

2. Develop engagement strategies that meet the needs of all learners	Secure local/state/federal funding	Strategy development	Number of evaluation tools developed	Number of youth and adult curricula elements	Number of youth and adult curricula elements
3. Develop engagement materials for non-traditional audiences, including multilingual translations, hearing/sight impaired accessible materials	Secure local/state/federal funding	Strategy development	Number of adaptations for hearing/sight impaired users	Number of different audiences reached; Evaluation results	Number of different audiences reached; Evaluation results

Operations Priorities, Goals, Desired Outcomes, and Measures of Success

*Administration & Operations*

Goal 1: Attract, retain, and develop talented staff

Desired Outcome: Retained skills and institutional knowledge

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Maintain a competitive compensation system through annual Cost of Labor (COL) evaluations and biennial market analyses	Perform COL assessment, Conduct market analysis, Implement market benchmarked compensation system	Perform COL Assessment	Perform COL assessment, Conduct market analysis	Perform COL Assessment	Perform COL Assessment
2. Provide competitive retirement benefits by joining the WA Department of Retirement Systems Public Employee Retirement System (PERS)	Prepare and evaluate PERS migration analysis	Continue to evaluate PERS migration and Implement based on the evaluation	Manage based on the evaluated and implemented migration	Continue to manage	Continue to manage
3. Invest in staff and develop skills sets through training budgets and sponsored activities	Fund individual training budgets as part of annual budgets and work plans	Continue to fund training budgets as part of annual budgets and work plans	Continue to fund training budgets as part of annual budgets and work plans	Continue to fund training budgets as part of annual budgets and work plans	Continue to fund training budgets as part of annual budgets and work plans

Goal 2: Maintain Whatcom CD facilities and capital equipment

Desired Outcome: Effective operations through safe facilities and equipment

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Finalize replacement schedules for computers and server, develop replacement schedules for vehicles and other equipment, consider using fixed asset depreciation schedules where applicable	Develop office equipment replacement schedule, budget for Year 2 implementation	Develop vehicle replacement schedule, plan building roof replacement project	Implement building roof replacement project	Continue to identify needs and implement based on funding	Continue to identify needs and implement based on funding
2. Replace aging vehicle inventory	-	Replace aging truck with energy efficient vehicle	Replace second aging truck with energy efficient vehicle	-	-
3. Maintain a safe and healthy workspace and public facility	-	Replace roof	Repair and paint exterior	Clean/seal/stripe parking lot	Improve office signage

4. Improve the building and grounds to create a welcoming conservation resource and demonstration center for the community	-	Install energy-efficient windows	Install solar panels	Convert current Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning system to electric heat pump system	Improve native landscaping and install stormwater raingarden
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Goal 3: Continue to update key elements of the Whatcom CD's administrative systems

Desired Outcome: Effective operations through up-to-date administrative systems

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Increase the capacity of the administration team to efficiently and effectively perform routine administrative functions	Develop position description and hire	Evaluate and adaptively manage	Evaluate and adaptively manage	Evaluate and adaptively manage	Evaluate and adaptively manage
2. Update Whatcom CD personnel policies and procedures	Initiate update of personnel policies	Complete update of personnel policies	-	-	-
3. Update Whatcom CD Board Governance policies and procedures	Initiate update of Board governance policies	Complete update of Board governance policies, Initiate update of other administration and operations policies	Complete update of other administration and operations policies, Update Personnel Manual	Develop Whatcom CD Safety Manual	-

*Funding Development*

Goal 1: Continue to develop Whatcom CD's funding structure and financial resources

Desired Outcome: Stabilized program budgets and work plans

<u>Priority Actions</u>	<u>Year One Measures</u>	<u>Year Two Measures</u>	<u>Year Three Measures</u>	<u>Year Four Measures</u>	<u>Year Five Measures</u>
1. Administer the Whatcom CD system of Rates and Charges (R&C)	Develop and implement R&C administrative systems	Maintain and adaptively manage	Maintain and adaptively manage	Maintain and adaptively manage	Maintain and adaptively manage
2. Engage key stakeholders on the benefits of R&C to address and implement community priorities	Develop communications collateral on the benefits of R&C to address and implement community priorities	Complete development of communications collateral on the benefits of R&C to address and implement community priorities	Maintain and adaptively manage	Maintain and adaptively manage	Maintain and adaptively manage
3. Build funding stability by maintaining a robust pipeline of grants	Renew ongoing funding sources; Secure new funding sources in alignment with priorities	Renew ongoing funding sources; Secure new funding sources in alignment with priorities	Renew ongoing funding sources; Secure new funding sources in alignment with priorities	Renew ongoing funding sources; Secure new funding sources in alignment with priorities	Renew ongoing funding sources; Secure new funding sources in alignment with priorities

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4. Explore opportunities for philanthropic funding, private sector partnerships, donations, etc. to diversify the Whatcom CD's funding structure	-	-	Explore opportunities	Continue to explore opportunities; Build relationships where feasible	Continue to explore opportunities; Build relationships where feasible; Develop proposals where feasible
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## Attachment 1

# WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT POLICIES, SYSTEMS, AND CAPACITY ASSESSMENT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS JANUARY 2022

## INTRODUCTION

Whatcom Conservation District is in the good position of having a dedicated Staff, good administrative systems to manage workflow, a Program of Work that is supported and co-funded by external partners, and the favorable regard of key partners as demonstrated in partner acknowledgments I've observed during recent public meetings.

An organizational assessment was undertaken at the request of the Board of Supervisors to better understand the state of operations in the organization and any unmet or emerging needs. The following preliminary report is based on one-on-one interviews with Board members, staff, and partners, and observations from day-to-day operations and engagement with the District's systems and staff.

The preliminary report is organized into five sections based on areas of assessment. Each area of assessment includes a summary of strengths and concerns shared followed by short to mid-term action and recommendations and a summary of longer-term recommendations that could be considered for action at a later date.

### Areas of Assessment

1. District Policies / Procedures
2. Compensation System, Salary Schedule, and Benefits
3. Staff Management, Development, and Retention
4. Program Capacity
5. Equipment and Tangible Assets
6. Board Development

## ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

### 1. District Policies and Procedures

#### *Strengths*

- Adopted Personnel manual
- A record of adopted governing and operating policies and procedures
- Safety management protocols in place and followed

#### *Concerns*

- Personnel Manual – Key personnel policies tied to required provisions and case law have not been updated since 1999.
- Board Governance Policies – While the District has adopted policies focused on Board governance, there is a need for an integrated compendium of Board governance policies outlining roles/responsibilities/authorities/delegation, etc.
- Safety Manual – There is a need for a manual of safety protocols and procedures to guide operations associated with common District workflow pathways, e.g. field work, office work, vehicle operation, etc.

*Recommendations – Short to Mid-Term*

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Recommended Process</b>	<b>Funding Considerations</b>	<b>Other Notes</b>
Update Personnel Manual	11 - 12 months	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Staff develops a workflow with outputs by schedule to guide activities</li> <li>2) Board Policy Subcommittee formed and convened</li> <li>3) Personnel policies identified and developed for full Board review</li> <li>4) Board approved Personnel Manual in place by 11/30/2022</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administration funds are needed to access an HR attorney               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– who will review final copy before adoption by Board</li> <li>– who will ensure common HR policies (e.g., whistle blower, at will employment, etc.) are updated to comply with requirements and address case law</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be prepared to adopt gap filing or time sensitive personnel policies in the intervening timeframe</li> </ul>
Compile and update Board Governance Policy Manual	January – May 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Staff develops a workflow with outputs by schedule to guide activities</li> <li>2) Board Policy Subcommittee formed and convened</li> <li>3) Personnel policies identified and</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administration funds may be needed to hire a facilitator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WSCC regional staff may be available to assist if needed.</li> <li>• WSCC facilitation services may be free of charge</li> </ul>

		developed for full Board review 4) Board approved Personnel Manual in place by 6/1/2022		
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*Longer Term Options*

- Prepare and adopt a District safety manual to guide employee use of equipment, and manage risk associated with specific work sectors (field, office, vehicle operation, etc.)

2. Staff Management, Development, and Retention

*Strengths*

- Dedicated and helpful work ethic within and across all teams
- Thoughtful, respectful, and culturally sensitive work environment
- Strong desire and commitment to grow the District’s book of business to better serve current and new customers and audiences
- Commitment to HR and general management best practices, and an interest in ongoing development of management knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- Adopted annual review system

*Concerns*

- Performance Reviews – There is variable use of performance reviews and the District’s performance review documentation system as a management tool. Annual reviews are part of a progressive approach to management that is intended to help staff be as effective as possible and that promotes timely redirection when needed.
- Check-in Meetings – There is inconsistent use of recurring check-in meetings between managers and direct reports. Check-in meetings support staff development as well as staff management and are integral to good communication up, down, and across an organization. Check-in meetings in combination with periodic assessments, including annual reviews, are part of a progressive approach to management that is intended to help staff be as effective as possible and that promotes timely redirection when needed. Additionally, staff who have regular one-on-one access to supervisor/manager have higher job satisfaction.
- Elective Training – WCD has no elective training budget for staff. Staff members are limited to grant/contract funded training that is project-related. This means that some staff receive training while others do not; and while free training opportunities exist, operating funds have not been allocated for on-the-job participation in free trainings. Elective training tied to a training plan developed by staff and their supervisor/manager is an important benefit that allows the District to invest in ongoing staff development.

*Recommendations – Short to Mid-Term*

Action	Timeline	Recommended Process	Funding Considerations	Other Notes
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Standardize Annual Performance Reviews	January – June 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Lead Staff develops a workflow with outputs by schedule to guide activities</li> <li>2) Team Leads collaborate to review and update the District’s check-in, assessment, and performance review system</li> <li>3) Team Leads perform annual reviews for the July 21 – June 22 work plan and budget cycle</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect an impact to the District cash reserve for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Managers to update associated tools and system</li> <li>– managers to prepare performance review documentation</li> <li>– staff to prepare self-evaluations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The goals are to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– conduct performance reviews for all positions on the same recurring annual cycle</li> <li>– use regular check-ins in combination with annual reviews</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Model and Manage for Consistent Employee Feedback and Communication	Immediately	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) District manager continue to mentor managers on using one-on-one check-in meetings</li> <li>2) Team Leads implement recurring one-on-one check-in meetings with direct reports</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect an impact to the District cash reserve for weekly one-on-one meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The goal is recurring weekly check-ins tied to quarterly assessments and annual reviews</li> </ul>
Provide an Elective Training Budget to All Staff	By February 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Team Leads collaborate to recommend a minimum per employee elective training budget</li> <li>2) Board approves an amended budget that includes training funds</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect an impact to the District cash reserve associated with extending this benefit</li> <li>• Staff can provide an analysis at the December Board meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The goal is to immediately increase benefits to offset stagnation other areas</li> </ul>

		3) Allocate a maximum number of hours per employee for participation in elective training		
See "Compensation System, Salary Schedule, Other Benefits" and "Program Capacity" for related and augmenting recommendations				

*Longer Term Options*

- Consider staff turnover as opportunity for employee growth and development

3. Compensation System, Salary Schedule, and Benefits

*Strengths*

- Adopted compensation system
- Adopted salary schedule
- Moderately strong benefits program, including Medical/Dental benefits policy that provides full family coverage, and a schedule of observed holidays along with accrued vacation and sick leave.

*Concerns*

- Compensation System –
  - The WCD compensation system of Bands and Grades has not been revisited for updates since inception.
  - WCD compensation related policies/procedures are not centralized in a Salary Administration Guide separate from a personnel manual, making it more difficult to administer and update as needed.
- Salary Schedule -
  - A market-based analysis, indexing the salary schedule to employment costs (ECI) or a cost of labor (COL) assessment, has not been conducted since before 2016. The standard is to conduct a market analysis every 3-6 years.
  - A common perception is that the compensation for coordinating grades and non-coordinating grades within some job classification bands does not reflect levels of responsibility.
  - The minimum and maximum compensation for band A1 and the first two steps for Band B1 are below the State directed minimum wage.
- Impaired Capacity to Retain Staff -
  - Wage Stagnation – Individual wages based on slotting in the adopted salary schedule have not been adjusted for cost of living increases (COLA) since 2016, and the time prior to that was 2008. As a result, WCD staff have experienced wage stagnation for some time. This reality is further exacerbated by pandemic-induced inflationary pressures on the cost of goods. Wage stagnation is a major contributor to workforce attrition in any organization, especially when private and public sector professional jobs in the vicinity of an employer are adjusted to keep pace with inflation and compete for talent. Since the District’s mission

depends on a well-trained and specialized professional work force, staff attrition directly impacts the organization’s ability to realize its mission.

- Retirement – WCD provides a Simple IRA retirement saving program. Unlike other CDs with dual participation in WA State benefits programs (WA HCA and WA DRS), WCD does not participate in the State DRS retirement saving programs (PERS and DCP). Staff are aware of this discrepancy and there is frustration associated with the knowledge that WCD could provide access to WA DRS PERS and has chosen to not do so.

*Recommendations – Short to Mid-Term*

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Recommended Process</b>	<b>Funding Considerations</b>	<b>Other Notes</b>
Adopt enhancements to compensation-aligned benefits	Immediately	1) Approve the November meeting agenda item recommending new paid and unpaid holidays 2) Implement immediately and offer new paid holidays beginning November and December 2021 3) Continue to offer full family medical/dental coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopting new paid holidays allows               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the cost of this benefit will be with composite rate and overhead calculations</li> <li>– recovery of the cost of the benefit through billed hours and overhead collected</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Expect a nominal impact to the District cash reserve associated with implementing this recommendation in 2021 before composite rates can recover the cost</li> <li>• Expect an ongoing nominal impact to the District cash reserve associated with extending this benefit to administration staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The goal is to provide an immediate increase in benefits that offsets stagnation in other areas</li> </ul>
Address wage stagnation by adopting a COLA to the salary schedule	January – April 2022	1) Staff develops a workflow with outputs by schedule to guide activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compensation changes can be offset through adjustments in composite rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The goal is to apply an approved COLA to May</li> </ul>

		<p>2) Board Subcommittee formed and mobilized</p> <p>3) COLA framework developed for full Board review</p> <p>4) Board approved COLA framework by April 25, 2022</p>	<p>calculations that are applied to billed hours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compensation changes for operations / administration staff can be offset through adjustments in indirect overhead rates</li> <li>• Grants and contracts negotiated to begin January 2022 have a built-in COL adjustment capacity built-in</li> <li>• All new grants and contracts will be negotiated to accommodate compensation changes associated with salary schedule adjustments</li> </ul>	<p>2022 compensation</p>
<p>Research Option to Migrate to WA DRS PERS</p>	<p>January – June 2022</p>	<p>1) Staff team develops a workflow with outputs by schedule to guide activities</p> <p>2) Team researches the option to migrate the District retirement system to WA DRS PERS</p> <p>3) Team presents report to Board at the June Board meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect an impact to the District cash reserve for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– management to research this option</li> <li>– perform associated financial analysis</li> <li>– compile findings</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The goal is to understand the steps and cost to migrate the District retirement program to WA DRS PERS</li> </ul>

*Longer Term Options*

- Migrate the District retirement program to the WA DRS PERS
- Consider adopting a Flexible Spending Account (Health FSA) benefit

- Consider adopting a sick leave cash-out benefit based on WA State’s program
- Consider providing a cafeteria plan that offers a suite of benefits to employees at an equal value. Benefits are part of an employee’s compensation package. Offering benefits based on lifestyle (e.g., married with children, without children, or single) or life stage (e.g., younger workforce member, older/aging workforce member) can result in different value compensation packages provided to individuals who are otherwise equal in job duties, experience, and skill.

#### 4. Program Capacity

##### *Strengths*

- Expert staff who are dedicated and innovative
- Business model that has been effective at securing grants and contracts
- Strong interagency and NGO partnerships
- Partnership-based approach to developing, implementing, and co-funding solutions to natural resource management challenges.

##### *Concerns*

- Impaired capacity to retain staff in a competitive work environment
- A lean administration team means there is little system redundancy or backup when there are emergency-related or unanticipated disruptions to workflow
- Reduced capacity to provide engineering support to all service sectors (in particular, dairies)
- No funding for staff to collaborate on advancing regional initiatives (e.g., PSCD Caucus, PSP) or emerging priorities (e.g., climate resilience), or unaddressed priorities (e.g., small lot forest conversion)
- Insufficient stable funding for consistent delivery of ongoing programs and services
- Insufficient stable funding for operations, administration, and financial management functions, including retained legal counsel and regular accountant/controller review of the District’s financials

##### *Recommendations – Short to Mid-Term*

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Recommended Process</b>	<b>Funding Considerations</b>	<b>Other Notes</b>
Continue to prioritize the current business practice of seeking new sources of grant and contract funding	On-going	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Lead staff collaborate on reviewing indirect rate analyses and update accordingly</li> <li>2) Roll-out indirect rate with guidance</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure overhead rate is negotiated and applied to all new grants and contracts so that indirect costs are recovered on an hourly billable basis</li> <li>• Expect some impact to the District cash reserve associated with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goals are to               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– ensure new funding sources are developed as current contracts sunset</li> <li>– ensure adequate operating funds until R&amp;C revenue receipts can be secured</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

			exploratory funding development	and are received
Secure a System of Rates of Charges	January – July 31, 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Staff develops a workflow with outputs by schedule to guide activities</li> <li>2) Board Subcommittee formed and mobilized</li> <li>3) Key stakeholders engaged to build support and secure approval</li> <li>4) Board approved program of work and rate model submitted no later than 8/1/2022</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administration funds needed to retain FCS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– to support development of rate model</li> <li>– to prepare rate model report for submittal to Whatcom County Council</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Expect some impact to the District cash reserve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goals are to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– expand or develop program / service sectors in partnership with key stakeholders / investors</li> <li>– Address emerging needs and priorities</li> <li>– provide stable funding for administration / operations / finance functions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Fund Enhancements to Administration Team Staffing	Immediate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Lead Staff develops a workflow with outputs by schedule to guide retaining a Financial Controller</li> <li>2) Develop and implement a plan to integrate a Controller</li> <li>3) Implement to advise on March 2022 financial report</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administration funds needed to retain a Controller to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– support regulatory compliance</li> <li>– continue to develop meaningful financial reports</li> <li>– support analysis of financial data</li> <li>– support revenue forecasting</li> <li>– support development of cash flow</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goals are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Enhanced confidence in District financial reporting</li> <li>– Enhanced understanding of District financial position</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

			monitoring system • Expect some impact to the District cash reserve	
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*Longer Term Options*

- Reinststate and ramp-up engineering services through a TSP or Task Order business model to enhance WCD/NRCS diary services partnership and WCD/WC PIC partnership
- Continue to explore funding sources to build-out and reorganize operations, administration, and finance functions.

5. Equipment and Tangible Assets

*Strengths*

- Technology, vehicle, and physical space assets are in place
- Adopted Asset Management policy
- Implemented asset management system
- In-house IT in combination with a nascent inter-CD system consulting services model

*Concerns*

- Electronic Equipment – A significant portion of the District’s electronic equipment is old and in some cases on the verge of failing. The District does not depreciate assets, manage replacement on a schedule, and has not budgeted to replace equipment that is critical to operations.
- Office Building –
  - The District has limited funding for office building maintenance beyond monthly janitorial services and minor upkeep. For example, repairs to the building roof have been postponed for over 2 years. The estimate for repair ranges from more affordable to less affordable depending on associated improvements such as siding repair and painting, photovoltaics for electric vehicle charging, etc. The most likely option for financing the roof repair is an equity loan.
  - Building maintenance and improvements are subject to Public Work requirements and WA L&I prevailing wage requirements. Currently there is no public works contract in place for grounds maintenance, septic system maintenance, and “handyman” services.
- Asset Management – Because asset management is distributed across a number of areas of work, a centralized asset records management system is needed to support oversight, management of replacement schedules, and management of other asset-related protocols.

*Recommendations – Short to Mid-Term*

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Recommended Process</b>	<b>Funding Considerations</b>	<b>Other Notes</b>
Develop an Equipment Replacement Schedule	July – September 2022	1) Staff team develops a workflow with outputs by	• None noted	• None noted

		<p>schedule to guide activities</p> <p>2) Team develops replacement schedule by category of asset (vehicles, computing, etc.)</p> <p>3) Replacement costs proposed for budget according to schedule</p> <p>4) Expense included in budget by Board approval</p>		
Replace the WCD Office Roof	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spring / Summer 2022 or Spring/Summer 2023</li> </ul>	<p>If 2022</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Secure loan</li> <li>2) Secure public work contracts</li> <li>3) Repair</li> </ol> <p>If 2023</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Build project reserve with or without loan</li> <li>2) Secure public works contracts</li> <li>3) Repair</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not recoverable through grants and contracts unless our overhead rate is adjusted</li> <li>• Expect an impact to District cash reserve</li> <li>• Consider financing options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider including other building improvements in this action such as siding repair and painting</li> <li>• Consider allocating any positive net income at budget year end for this action</li> </ul>
Upgrade the WCD Server	By December 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Lead staff compiles estimates</li> <li>2) Costs proposed for budget</li> <li>3) Expense included in budget by Board approval</li> <li>4) Purchase coordinated</li> <li>5) New server installed</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not recoverable through grants and contracts unless our overhead rate is adjusted</li> <li>• Expect an impact to District cash reserve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estimate \$4,000-\$6,000</li> </ul>
Purchase at least two new	By December 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Lead staff compiles estimates</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not recoverable through grants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estimate \$2,000 per unit</li> </ul>

laptop/mobile computers		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2) Costs proposed for budget</li> <li>3) Expense included in budget by Board approval</li> <li>4) Purchase coordinated</li> <li>5) New computers deployed</li> </ol>	<p>and contracts unless our overhead rate is adjusted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect an impact to District cash reserve</li> </ul>	
Purchase new plotter printer	By December 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Lead staff compiles estimates</li> <li>2) Costs proposed for budget</li> <li>3) Expense included in budget by Board approval</li> <li>4) Purchase coordinated</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not recoverable through grants and contracts unless our overhead rate is adjusted</li> <li>• Expect an impact to District cash reserve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estimate \$6,000-\$8,000</li> </ul>
Migrate from Office 2016 to Office 365	January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead Staff develops a workflow with outputs by schedule to guide license purchase</li> <li>• Contract negotiated</li> <li>• Purchase completed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not recoverable through grants and contracts unless our overhead rate is adjusted</li> <li>• Expect an impact to District cash reserve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual fee</li> <li>• \$18 per user per month</li> <li>• Estimate \$4000-\$6,000</li> </ul>

*Longer Term Options*

- Implement an electronic equipment replacement schedule
- Consider adopting a framework for depreciation of long-term tangible assets (e.g., the WCD office building) and possibly short-term tangible assets (e.g., computing equipment)

6. Board Development

*Strengths*

- Enthusiastic and committed Board members
- Broad range of ambassadorial backgrounds, including commercial farming, salmon recovery, local food economy, conservation, and legislative experience
- Strong desire to develop the Board as a cohesive body

*Concerns*

- A prevalent feeling among Board members of an inadequate level of Board development
- A prevalent feeling among Board members of a tendency toward individual silos
- A worry among Board members that we will lose our good Board members

*Recommendations – Short to Mid-Term*

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Recommended Process</b>	<b>Funding Considerations</b>	<b>Other Notes</b>
Plan and Implement Board Development Opportunities	By April 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Board identifies preferred “team building” opportunities</li> <li>2) Lead Staff develops a workflow with outputs by schedule to guide implementation</li> <li>3) Board and Lead Staff collaborate to implement</li> <li>4) Associated expenses included in budget by Board approval</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any associated expenses are not recoverable through grants and contracts unless our overhead rate is adjusted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Notice” Board development meetings and engagements when not concurrent with regularly scheduled Board meetings</li> </ul>
Form and Utilize Board Subcommittees	By April 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Board identifies key committee area</li> <li>2) Board members self-select for committee participation based upon interests</li> <li>3) Board Subcommittees formed and mobilized</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not recoverable through grants and contracts unless our overhead rate is adjusted</li> <li>• Expect an impact to District cash reserve associated with additional staff time to plan, prepare, coordinate, and document</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use subcommittees to provide opportunities to dive deeper into policy and governance roles</li> <li>• “Notice” subcommittee meetings where more than 2 Board members have interest in participation</li> </ul>
Develop Board “Ambassador” Priorities and	By April 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Board identifies key areas for ambassadorial engagement</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any associated expenses are not recoverable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use “Ambassador” roles to “center” the CD</li> </ul>

Identify Key Areas for Engagement		<p>2) Board members self-select for engagement opportunities based upon interests</p> <p>3) Board members agree upon an reporting structure for “ambassador” activities</p> <p>4) Board members engage in key areas and mobilized</p>	through grants and contracts unless our overhead rate is adjusted	<p>on important service sectors and emerging priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use “Ambassador” role to build support for system of Rates and Charges</li> </ul>
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*Longer Term Options*

- To be developed with Board participation

## Appendix A

### Cross-cutting Recommendations

- Calendar Year Budget Cycle (Procedures x Management x Capacity)
  - Shift the WCD budget cycle from a state fiscal year budget to a calendar year budget
  - Focus no 1 – Resolve current accounting challenges associated with cash-based operation reporting in a CY-based accounting system
  - Focus no 2 – Align financial records, management systems, and reporting system with a rates and charges collection cycle
  - Timeline – Recommend preparing a 6-month budget for July 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022 and an annual calendar year budget beginning January 2023
  
- Hybrid Work Model (Management x Capacity x Retention x Benefits)
  - Continue to develop WCD’s hybrid work model
  - Focus – Increased workforce efficiency, positive staff experience, and migration to performance-based management
  - Timeline – Ongoing
  
- Depreciation Framework (Program Capacity x Asset management)
  - Consider adopting a framework for asset depreciation
  - Focus – Planning and funding equipment replacement
  - Timeline – March 2023

## Attachment 2

### Whatcom CD Stakeholder Engagement Survey

1. Which three natural resources in Whatcom County are the most important for your District to conserve, enhance or protect? Please list in order of priority.

Results are summarized below in pie charts by number of responses.

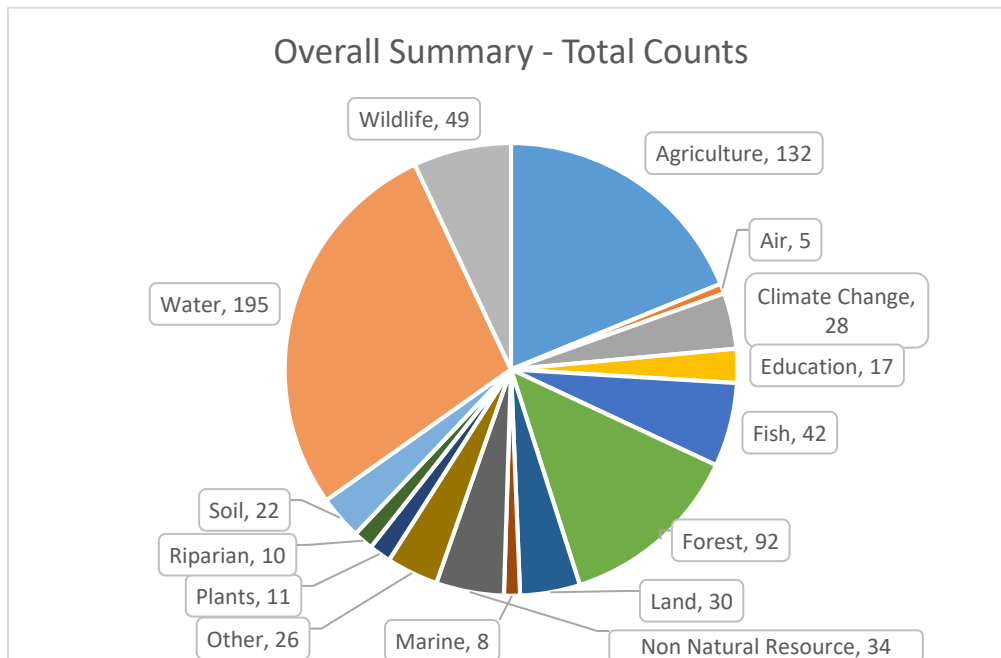
Examples of responses in the top three categories are below:

**Water** = "Clean water/streams" "Shoreline" "Water Quality/quantity" "water supply and quality"

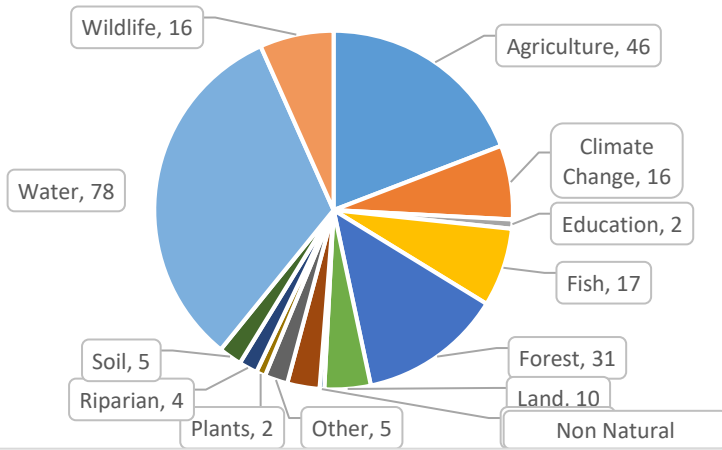
**Agriculture/Farmland** = "active agriculture" "Farm Stewardship" "Open farmland" "Maintain agricultural areas"

**Forest** = "Timber Resources" "Forest ecosystems" "Trees" "forested/vegetated riparian buffers"

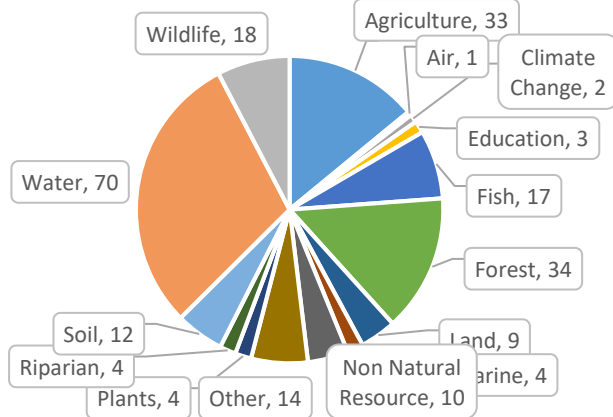
**Non Natural Resource** = "Development rights" "Recreation" "Noise" "Traffic"



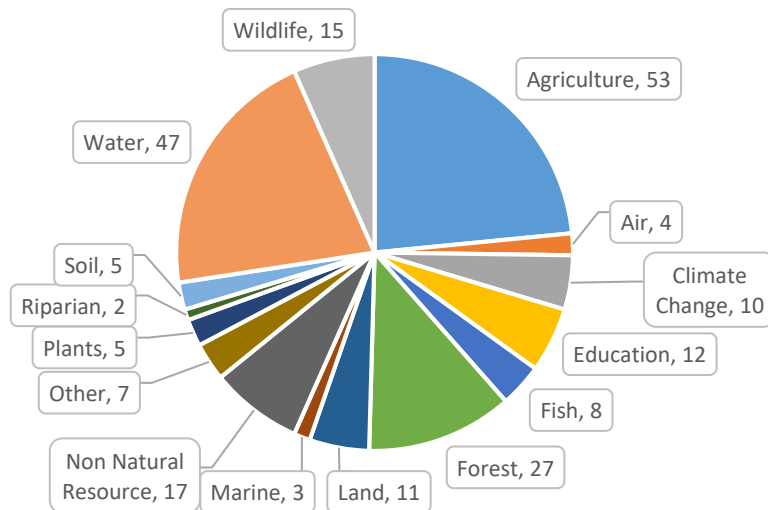
### 1st Choice Summary



### 2nd Choice Summary



### 3rd Choice Summary



2. **Of the following areas\* of conservation programming, which are the most important for the District to offer? Please rank the 7 areas of programming in order of priority.** (Selections were randomized for each participant)

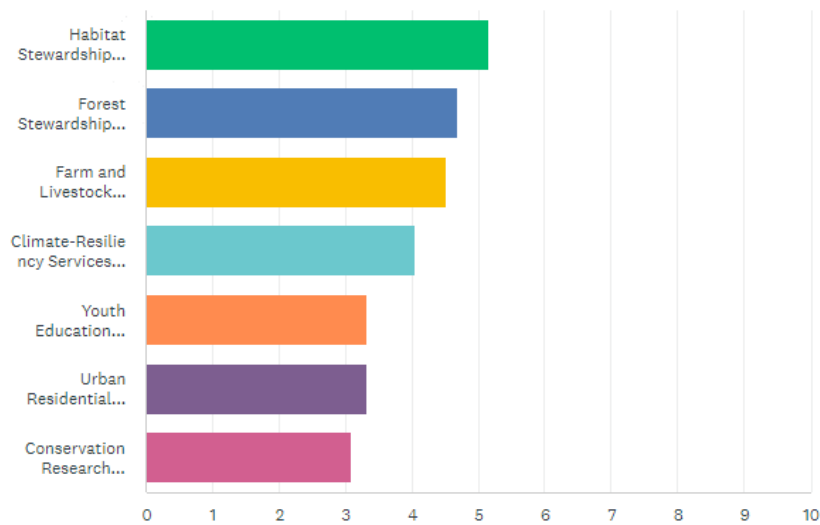
- Habitat Stewardship Services
- Forest Stewardship Services
- Farm and Livestock Services
- Climate-Resiliency Services
- Youth Education Services
- Urban Residential Services
- Conservation Research Services

\* Note that under each category were examples of service options

**Summary of responses** are below by their weighted average. Habitat, Forests, Farms stewardship as well as Climate-Resiliency services were the highest-ranking priority conservation programs for the District. Which follow closely to the NRP areas identified in question 1.

Of the following areas of conservation programming, which are the most important for the District to offer? Please rank the 7 areas of programming in order of priority.

Answered: 245 Skipped: 8



3. What options didn't you see above, or additional criteria you would add, that you believe the District should offer?

- [These responses have not been summarized or coded at this time, see [LINK](#) for all results]

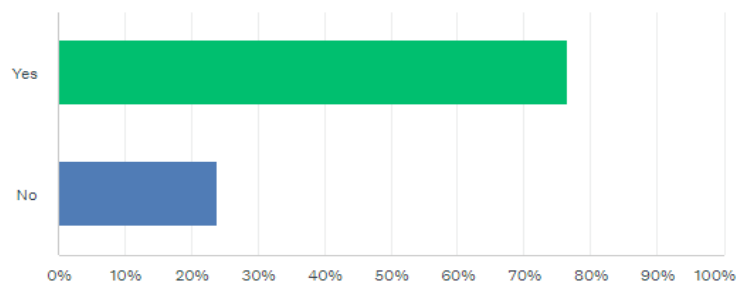
4. Would you be willing to pay an annual conservation fee to implement the District programs and activities you identified in Questions 1, 2, and 3

- Yes
- No

**Results indicate** that the majority of respondents 76% be willing to pay an annual conservation fee to implement the District programs and activities. (N=242)

Would you be willing to pay an annual conservation fee to implement the District programs and activities you identified in Questions 1, 2, and 3?

Answered: 242 Skipped: 4



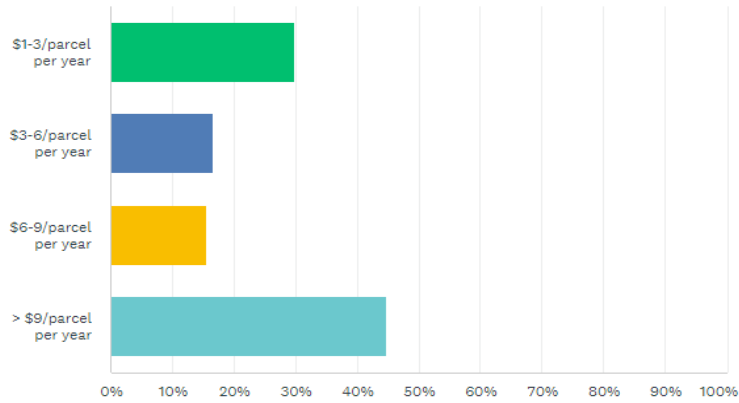
5. If yes, which of the following annual fee ranges would you pay to implement those District programs and activities?

- \$1-3/parcel per year
- \$3-6/parcel per year
- \$6-9/parcel per year
- >\$9/parcel per year

**Results indicate** 29% are willing to pay \$1-\$3 per parcel at with 49% of respondents would be willing to pay >\$9 per parcel.

If yes, which of the following annual fee ranges would you pay to implement those District programs and activities?

Answered: 181 Skipped: 65



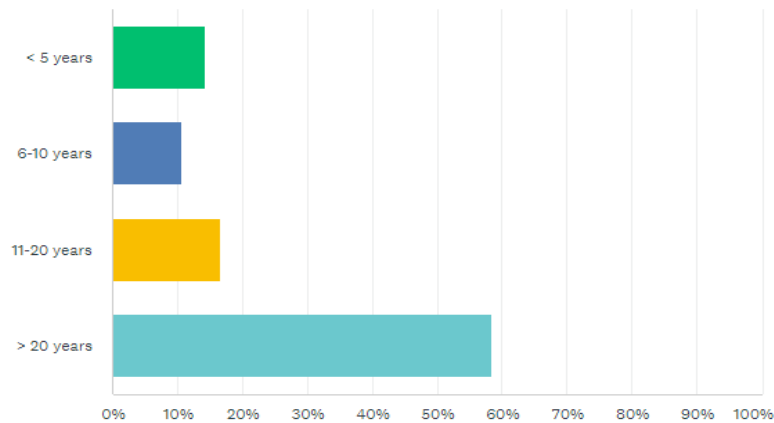
6. How long have you lived in Whatcom County?

- < 5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- >20 years

**Results indicate** that the majority of respondents 58% are long term residents of Whatcom County >20 years. (N=255) It could then be inferred that they are vested in the community, familiar with natural resource challenges.

How long have you lived in Whatcom County?

Answered: 245 Skipped: 1



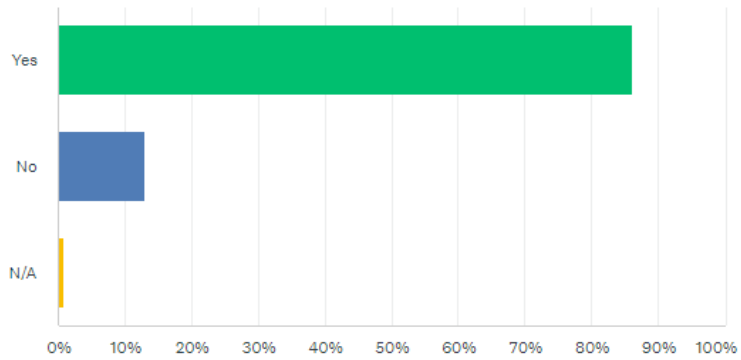
7. Do you own your parcel/property

- Yes
- No

**Results indicate** that the majority of respondents 86% own property in Whatcom County. It could be inferred that they understand the challenges around land ownership, cost of current property taxes, and value programs that help steward their land. (N=246)

Do you own your parcel/property?

Answered: 246 Skipped: 0



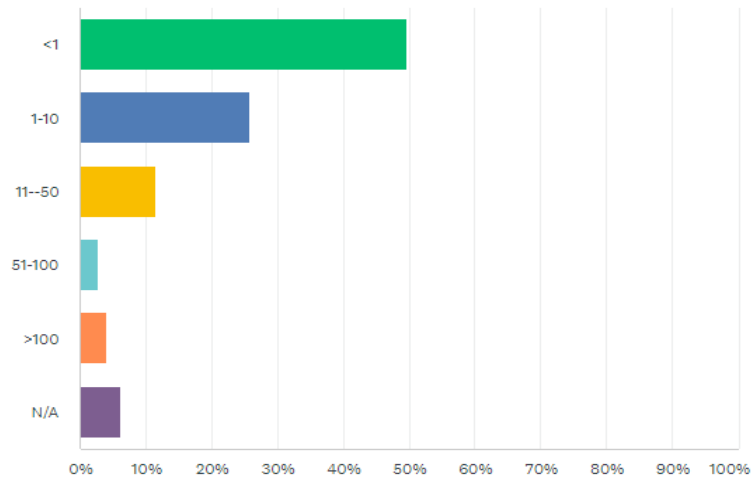
8. How many acres of land do you own, lease and/or manage

- <1
- 1-10
- 11--50
- 51-100
- >100
- N/A

**Results indicate** that the majority of respondents 49% own/manage less than 1 acres of land, but 28% own/manage 1-10 acres. (N=244)

## How many acres of land do you own, lease and/or manage?

Answered: 244 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
<1	49.59% 121
1-10	25.82% 63
11--50	11.48% 28
51-100	2.87% 7
>100	4.10% 10
N/A	6.15% 15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>244</b>

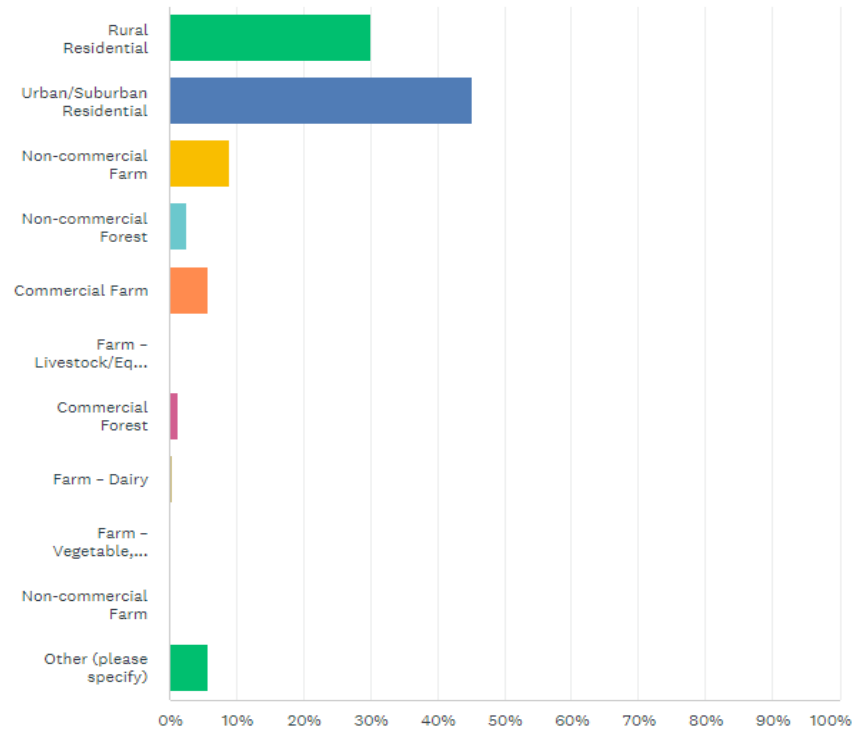
### 9. Select the type of landownership or operation that best describes your situation

- Rural Residential
- Urban/Suburban Residential
- Non-commercial Farm
- Non-commercial Forest
- Commercial Farm
- Commercial Forest
- Other (please specify)

**Results indicate** that the majority of respondents 45% are Urban/Suburban Residential landowners with a mix of rural and urban. It could be inferred then that their interest in natural resource conservation is driven by intrinsic values rather than economic as they are not living off of the land they manage. (N=243)

Select the type of landownership or operation that best describes your situation.

Answered: 243 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Rural Residential	30.04% 73
▼ Urban/Suburban Residential	45.27% 110
▼ Non-commercial Farm	9.05% 22
▼ Non-commercial Forest	2.47% 6
▼ Commercial Farm	5.76% 14
▼ Farm - Livestock/Equine	0.00% 0
▼ Commercial Forest	1.23% 3
▼ Farm - Dairy	0.41% 1
▼ Farm - Vegetable, Nursery/Greenhouse/Floriculture & Sod	0.00% 0
▼ Non-commercial Farm	0.00% 0
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 5.76% 14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>243</b>

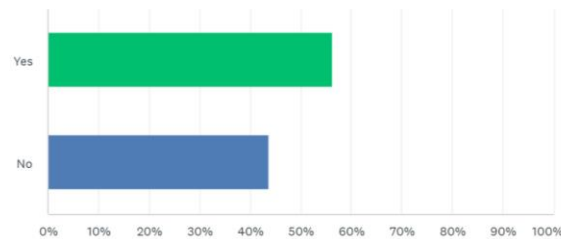
10. . Does your land contain or is it adjacent to a waterbody (examples include marine shoreline, creek, and wetland)

- Yes
- No

**Results indicate** that half of respondents (56%) live adjacent to a waterbody. This is interesting as the results for question #1 indicate water as being a priority resource for protection. It can also be inferred that this is not representative of Whatcom County as a whole in that it is not possible that >50% of Whatcom county residents live adjacent to a water body, but it does make sense that those living next to water would care more deeply about its protection. (N=249)

Does your land contain or is it adjacent to a waterbody (examples include marine shoreline, creek, and wetland)?

Answered: 252 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	56.22% 140
No	43.78% 109
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>249</b>

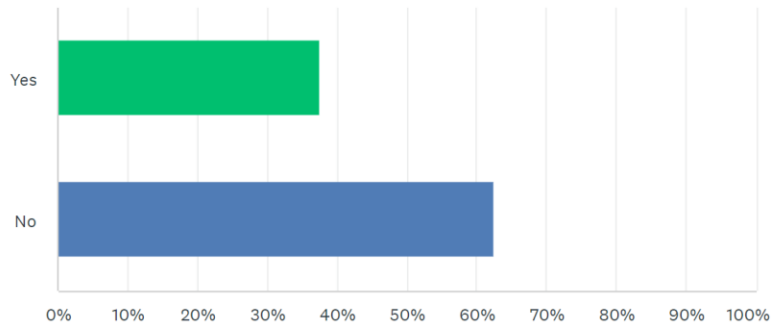
### 11. Does your land contain a woodlot or forest

- Yes
- No

**Results indicate** that the majority of respondents (38%) own/manage land with woodland forest (land containing growing trees). While only 62% do not have any woodland. (N=250)

# Does your land contain a woodlot or forest?

Answered: 252 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Yes	37.60%	94
▼ No	62.40%	156
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>250</b>

### Attachment 3

The following resources were considered to identify natural resource priorities, goals, and actions.

<i>Resource Title</i>	<i>Location</i>
<i>Agriculture Land Conservation</i>	
WC Conservation Easement Program	<a href="https://www.whatcomcounty.us/573/Conservation-Easement-Program">https://www.whatcomcounty.us/573/Conservation-Easement-Program</a>
WC Keep Local Ag Working Storyboard	<a href="https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/fbadc540caaf45cc83a70965e48d2481">https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/fbadc540caaf45cc83a70965e48d2481</a>
WLT Land Protection Plan Focus Area #3	<a href="https://whatcomlandtrust.org/protected-land/conservation-plan/">https://whatcomlandtrust.org/protected-land/conservation-plan/</a>
USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service 2017 Census of Agriculture, Whatcom County Profile	<a href="https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Washington/cp53073.pdf">https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Washington/cp53073.pdf</a>
WSU Extention Presentation on USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service 2017 Census of Agriculture	<a href="https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2091/2019/08/2017AgStatsSummary.pdf">https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2091/2019/08/2017AgStatsSummary.pdf</a>
<i>Climate Change</i>	
Climate Change and Stream flow: Barriers and Opportunities - Preliminary project report to the Washington State Department of Ecology	<a href="https://wrc.wsu.edu/activity-and-product/climate-change-and-stream-flow-barriers-and-opportunities/">https://wrc.wsu.edu/activity-and-product/climate-change-and-stream-flow-barriers-and-opportunities/</a>
<i>Climate Resiliency</i>	
City of Bellingham Climate Protection Action Plan	<a href="https://cob.org/services/environment/climate/program">https://cob.org/services/environment/climate/program</a>
City of Bellingham Climate Task Force Report (12-2-2019)	<a href="https://cob.org/wp-content/uploads/Climate-Task-Force-FINAL-Report-12_2_19.pdf">https://cob.org/wp-content/uploads/Climate-Task-Force-FINAL-Report-12_2_19.pdf</a>
Nooksack Indian Tribe Climate Adaptation Plan	<a href="https://cig.uw.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/11/Nooksack-Adaptaiton-Plan-FINAL_errata_11.24.21_v2.pdf">https://cig.uw.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/11/Nooksack-Adaptaiton-Plan-FINAL_errata_11.24.21_v2.pdf</a>
Whatcom County Climate Action Plan	<a href="https://www.whatcomcounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/61403/CAP-Final--20211022-ver2">https://www.whatcomcounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/61403/CAP-Final--20211022-ver2</a>
<i>Climate Resiliency - Forests</i>	
A Climate Resilience Guide for Smal Forest Landowners in Western Washington	<a href="https://cig.uw.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/04/SmallForestLandowner-Guide-RedSize.pdf">https://cig.uw.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/04/SmallForestLandowner-Guide-RedSize.pdf</a>

<i>Resource Title</i>	<i>Location</i>
<i>Food Policy &amp; Local Food Economy</i>	
Food Policy Fourm Early Action Implementation (2020)	<a href="https://www.scc.wa.gov/fpf/resources">https://www.scc.wa.gov/fpf/resources</a>
Food Policy Fourm Recommendations To Legislature (2021)	<a href="https://www.scc.wa.gov/fpf/resources">https://www.scc.wa.gov/fpf/resources</a>
Whatcom Community Food Assessment (2021)	<a href="https://www.whatcomcounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/59394/Community-Food-Assessment-Draft-2021">https://www.whatcomcounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/59394/Community-Food-Assessment-Draft-2021</a>
Whatcom County Food System Plan One-Pager	<a href="https://www.whatcomcounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/67358/Food-System-Plan-One-Pager">https://www.whatcomcounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/67358/Food-System-Plan-One-Pager</a>
Draft Whatcom County Food System Plan	Available from Whatcom CD
<i>Forestland Conversion</i>	
Future of Washington's Forest and Forest Industries Study, Final Report: July 2007, Study 4: Forest Land Conversion in Washington State	<a href="http://www.ruraltech.org/projects/fwaf/">http://www.ruraltech.org/projects/fwaf/</a>
<i>Hazard Management - Tribal Priorities</i>	
Lummi Hazard Mitigation - Lummi Nation Floodplain Management Plan: 2022 Progress Report	<a href="https://www.lummi-nsn.gov/userfiles/72_Activity510MHMPProgressReport2022FINAL.pdf">https://www.lummi-nsn.gov/userfiles/72_Activity510MHMPProgressReport2022FINAL.pdf</a>
Lummi Hazard Mitigation - Lummi Nation Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan 2020 Update	<a href="https://www.lummi-nsn.gov/userfiles/LummiNationMHMP2020UpdateFINAL.pdf">https://www.lummi-nsn.gov/userfiles/LummiNationMHMP2020UpdateFINAL.pdf</a>
<i>Regional Priorities - PSCDs</i>	
PSCD Caucus Mission Vision Values	<a href="https://betterground.org/pscd/core-values/">https://betterground.org/pscd/core-values/</a>
PSCD Caucus Portfolio Of Regional Programs And Services	<a href="https://betterground.org/pscd/core-values/">https://betterground.org/pscd/core-values/</a>
PSCD Caucus Priorities and Next Steps (2018)	<a href="https://betterground.org/pscd/core-values/">https://betterground.org/pscd/core-values/</a>
<i>Population Trends</i>	
Whatcom County Population and Employment Projections and Urban Growth Area Allocations - Phase I Technical Report	<a href="https://wrc.wsu.edu/activity-and-product/climate-change-and-stream-flow-barriers-and-opportunities/">https://wrc.wsu.edu/activity-and-product/climate-change-and-stream-flow-barriers-and-opportunities/</a>
<i>Regional Priorities - PSP</i>	
Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda	<a href="https://www.psp.wa.gov/2022AAupdate.php">https://www.psp.wa.gov/2022AAupdate.php</a>

<i>Resource Title</i>	<i>Location</i>
<i>Salmon Recovery</i>	
Whatcom County Community Water and Salmon Survey Findings (WRIA 1)	Available from Whatcom CD
WDFW Riparian Ecosystems Volume 1 Science Synthesis & Management	<a href="https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/01987/wdfw01987.pdf">https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/01987/wdfw01987.pdf</a>
WDFW Riparian Ecosystems Volume 2 Management Recommendations	<a href="https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/01988/wdfw01988.pdf">https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/01988/wdfw01988.pdf</a>
WRIA 1 Nearshore Estuarine Assessment Restoration Prioritization Addendum Jan 2014	<a href="https://salmonwria1.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/wria1-nearshore-estuarine-assessment-restoration-prioritization-addendum-1-2014.pdf">https://salmonwria1.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/wria1-nearshore-estuarine-assessment-restoration-prioritization-addendum-1-2014.pdf</a>
<i>Water Quality</i>	
Lake Whatcom: Lk Whatcom Comprehensive Stormwater Plan_ExecutiveSummary	<a href="https://www.whatcomcounty.us/1022/Lake-Whatcom-Plans">https://www.whatcomcounty.us/1022/Lake-Whatcom-Plans</a>
Lake Whatcom: Lk Whatcom Comprehensive Stormwater Plan_Factsheets	<a href="https://www.whatcomcounty.us/1022/Lake-Whatcom-Plans">https://www.whatcomcounty.us/1022/Lake-Whatcom-Plans</a>
Lake Whatcom: Lk Whatcom Comprehensive Stormwater Plan_TableOfContents	<a href="https://www.whatcomcounty.us/1022/Lake-Whatcom-Plans">https://www.whatcomcounty.us/1022/Lake-Whatcom-Plans</a>
Farm Planning Customer Service Satisfaction Survey (WC PIC Client Survey Preport)	Available from Whatcom CD
Water Quality Standards For Surface Waters of the Lummi Indian Reservation	<a href="https://www.lummi-nsn.gov/userfiles/1_17%20LAR%2007%20Water%20Quality%20Standards.pdf">https://www.lummi-nsn.gov/userfiles/1_17%20LAR%2007%20Water%20Quality%20Standards.pdf</a>
<i>Water Quality - Shellfish</i>	
Birch Bay Initial Closure Response Strategy	<a href="https://www.whatcomcounty.us/1101/Shellfish-Protection-Districts">https://www.whatcomcounty.us/1101/Shellfish-Protection-Districts</a>
Drayton Harbor Shellfish Recovery Plan (2007)	<a href="https://www.whatcomcounty.us/1101/Shellfish-Protection-Districts">https://www.whatcomcounty.us/1101/Shellfish-Protection-Districts</a>
Portage Bay Initial Closure Response Strategy	<a href="https://www.whatcomcounty.us/1101/Shellfish-Protection-Districts">https://www.whatcomcounty.us/1101/Shellfish-Protection-Districts</a>
Portage Bay Shellfish Recovery Plan (2014)	<a href="https://www.whatcomcounty.us/1101/Shellfish-Protection-Districts">https://www.whatcomcounty.us/1101/Shellfish-Protection-Districts</a>
<i>Water Quantity</i>	

<i>Resource Title</i>	<i>Location</i>
HirstComments_WAC173-501	Available from Whatcom CD
RH2 Technical Memorandum - Water Rights and Relinquishment in WC	Available from Whatcom CD
Whatcom County PUD Drought Contingency Plan	<a href="https://www.pudwhatcom.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/WPUD-Drought-Contingency-Plan-FINAL2019.pdf">https://www.pudwhatcom.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/WPUD-Drought-Contingency-Plan-FINAL2019.pdf</a>
<i>Whatcom Conservation District Surveys</i>	
Long-range Planning Stakeholder Survey Report (2022)	Available from Whatcom CD
NWQI Ten Mile Creek Survey Results	Available from Whatcom CD
Staff SWOT Analysis	Available from Whatcom CD
WCD Organization Assessment	Available from Whatcom CD

## Attachment 4

The following are Whatcom County data included in the USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service 2017 Census of Agriculture Census

Total Population	226,300 people
Total Acres in Agriculture	1,348,480 acres
Total Producers	2,982 producers
Land Use Types	<u>Acres</u>
Forest Land (managed and unmanaged)	825,000
Pasture/Hayland	39,903
Silage Corn	14,288
Berry	16,738
Potato	3,229
Orchard	275
Active/Farmed Forest	6,151
Other 2022 mapped Agriculture	2,913
Irrigated Farmland	36,498
Livestock Types	<u>Quantity</u>
Cows	83,543
Horses	1,592
Goats and Sheep	1,839
Poultry	13,642