



## Thurston Conservation District 2024 Annual Work Plan

### Mission

*We educate and assist the citizens of Thurston County in the management of natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations, inspiring voluntary, incentive-based conservation practices.*

### Introduction

This Thurston Conservation District 2024 Annual Work Plan links directly to the content and format of the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan and aligns with the adopted annual budget.

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## Natural Resource Priorities, Goals, and Actions

### 1. Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

To help producers and community members understand and adapt to the changing climate, we continue to engage in and relay the best available science through education and technical assistance services. We seek to support our community in proactive climate change adaptation measures such as flood and fire prevention, drought, ocean acidification in local marine waters,

suitable crops, and forest regeneration incorporating climate adaptability, and alternative pest and plant disease control. We are committed to work with our community to conserve and protect our natural resources in response to climate change. In addition, we strive as an organization to demonstrate sustainable practices in our work and office culture.

GOALS	ACTIONS
1) <i>Assist with drought mitigation.</i>	A. Provide water use technical recommendations to 3 community members.
2) <i>Enhance fire safety for land and homeowners.</i>	A. Develop fire safety strategies and recommendations at 50 sites.
3) <i>Mitigate flood impacts on residents in the Chehalis Basin.</i>	A. Host 1 community meeting focused on the Chehalis Basin Strategy to keep residents informed. B. Participate in Chehalis Basin Strategy and protect landowner involvement in the process.
4) <i>Assist farms in mitigating and adapting to climate change.</i>	A. Host 2 workshops to help farmers adapt to climate change. B. Work with 2 farms to implement carbon sequestration practices. C. Improve emergency readiness for 5 community members. D. Host an ag symposium including a focus on climate change.
5) <i>Improve community resilience to climate change.</i>	A. Host 2 professional development opportunities for teachers. B. Develop flood reduction and water supply projects in the Deschutes watershed.

## 2. Local Food Production & Consumption

By increasing engagement in the local food system, Thurston Conservation District is supporting working lands, rural economic development, reduction of pollution caused by product processing and transportation, equitable access to healthy local food, and the economic viability of our agricultural community and geographic region. Locally produced food connects people to the land, improves our region’s food security, creates more informed land stewards, and fosters support for resource conservation, the agricultural community and farmland preservation.

GOALS	ACTIONS
6) <i>Support urban and suburban food production.</i>	A. Provide technical assistance to 4 community gardens, tribal gardens, school gardens or garden clubs. B. Provide technical assistance to 60 urban and suburban community members.

7) *Increase accessibility to healthy local food for community members of Thurston County.*

- C. Implement conservation BMPs on 5 farms within urban or urban growth areas.
- D. Host 2 workshops on backyard food production.
- A. Partner with local food banks to connect at least 1 community that lacks sufficient support with fresh local food.
- B. Strengthen partnerships with 2 local organizations to support community gardens, school gardens, and home-based food production (could name Bounty for Families and TCFB).
- C. Partner to host 1 workshop for families on cooking with fresh food.
- D. Participate in regional and local food system networks and partnerships (South Sound Food System Network, Regional Food System Partnership, TCAT Regenerative Ag & Food Workgroup)

### 3. Producer Support & Preservation of Working Lands

In an effort to continue to support the preservation of working lands, Thurston Conservation District will continue offering technical assistance and conservation planning services to community members (supported through measures and goals in *Rural and Urban Stewardship*). We are the technical provider for the [Voluntary Stewardship Program \(VSP\)](#). The VSP is an alternative approach for counties to meet critical areas ordinance goals on private lands, while maintaining agricultural viability. In addition, we will work to educate new and beginning stewards of working lands. We assist small and large producers and commercial and non-commercial operations. We will continue to work with existing land stewards to implement Conservation Practice Standards and Best Management Practices and assist with planning for their future and beyond retirement. We will continue to partner with key organizations and individuals to provide quality technical, financial and educational resources. We promote regenerative agriculture and [sustainable forestry](#) encouraging conservation of natural resources, and economic viability of the operation.

#### GOALS

#### ACTIONS

8) *Work with partners to protect critical working lands through easements and acquisitions.*

A. Apply for funding to facilitate working lands easements through partnerships (RCPP, Sentinel Landscape Partnership, Conservation Grazing Partnership).

9) *Increase voluntary stewardship.*

- A. Increase participation in the Voluntary Stewardship Program by 15 participants.
- B. Develop 15 Individual Stewardship Plans.

<b>10) Support viable farms.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C. Support community members through regulatory processes such as inspections and referrals.</li> <li>A. Connect producers to business planning and training courses and/or resources.</li> <li>B. Connect local producers to consumers through online tools and marketing support.</li> <li>C. Support streamlined application and permitting processes for community members.</li> </ul>
<b>11) Increase support for forest stewardship.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Facilitate the development of 4 forest management plans (FMP's).</li> <li>B. Hire TCD Stewardship Forester.</li> <li>C. Support efforts to preserve working forest land.</li> </ul>
<b>12) Increase technical assistance to producers.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Facilitate 220 site visits with producers.</li> <li>B. Provide technical recommendations on 300 BMPs.</li> </ul>
<b>13) Bridge the gap between retiring and beginning producers.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Offer 1 successional planning training course.</li> <li>B. Provide resources to 10 new farmers.</li> <li>C. Increase outreach to landowners to share leasing opportunities via South Sound FarmLink</li> <li>D. Collaborate with existing land matching programs.</li> <li>E. Educate and connect real estate agents farmland transfer programs.</li> </ul>
<b>14) Support sustainable shellfish production.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Work with 1 shellfish operation to implement conservation BMPs.</li> <li>B. Conduct a needs assessment for local shellfish producers to identify areas to support and innovative ideas.</li> </ul>
<b>15) Increase inventory and use of equipment rental service.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Identify additional pieces of equipment needed by the community to expand TCD's rental program.</li> <li>B. Purchase a manure spreader and turkey processor to add to TCD's rental program.</li> <li>C. Plan hands-on training for no-till drill.</li> <li>D. Ensure appropriate use of the equipment by creating technically sound guidance documents for all equipment.</li> </ul>

#### **4. Protect and Restore Ecosystems**

Thurston Conservation District recognizes the quantity and diversity of critical ecosystems within our region and strives to protect intact habitat, while also working to restore degraded areas. Thurston County is home to state and federally listed endangered species, prairie ecosystems, vital marine and estuarine habitat, forestland, sensitive riparian areas and shellfish beds. Flood mitigation projects are complex and combine elements of river restoration, floodplain reconnection, and flood harm reduction strategies. Education is the first step to resource conservation on private lands and the District will continue to engage

the community to raise awareness of the vital role of our critical ecosystems and their processes. We will also continue to coordinate financial resources and facilitate ecosystem recovery at the local level.

GOALS	ACTIONS
<p><b>16)</b> <i>Work with partners to protect critical habitat through restoration easements and habitat enhancement contracts.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Develop 1 new CREP contract.</li> <li>B. Facilitate 3 conservation easements (termed or permanent) through TCD and partner programs.</li> <li>C. Strengthen partnerships with local accredited land trusts.</li> </ul>
<p><b>17)</b> <i>Increase restoration of degraded habitat.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Create 3 site-specific pollinator habitat projects.</li> <li>B. Complete 1 wetland habitat enhancement project.</li> <li>C. Treat 15 acres of invasive species.</li> <li>D. Develop 5 planting plans.</li> <li>E. Provide habitat restoration technical assistance to 50 community members.</li> <li>F. Facilitate 50 site visits with community members focused on habitat restoration.</li> </ul>
<p><b>18)</b> <i>Restore marine and freshwater habitat to support healthy aquatic species populations and functional floodplains.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Plant 6 acres of riparian habitat to support salmon recovery.</li> <li>B. Develop 2 restoration projects in freshwater systems with salmon runs.</li> <li>C. Support 25 shoreline community members to improve shoreline habitat.</li> </ul>
<p><b>19)</b> <i>Enhance ESA listed species habitat (plant &amp; animal).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Work with 1 community member to improve Oregon Spotted Frog habitat.</li> <li>B. Host 1 Orca Recovery Day event to bring awareness to endangered salmon and orca populations.</li> <li>C. Work with 10 community members through VSP to support on-farm management and recovery of listed species.</li> </ul>
<p><b>20)</b> <i>Develop local riparian restoration cost-share program.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Work with local and state partners to secure funding for local riparian restoration program.</li> </ul>

**5. Soil Conservation and Health**

Thurston Conservation District recognizes that soil is a living and life-giving natural resource. As world population and food production demands rise, keeping our soil healthy and productive is of paramount importance. By farming using soil health principles and systems that include no-till, cover cropping and diverse rotations, more and more farmers are actually increasing their soil’s organic matter and improving microbial activity. As a result, farmers are sequestering more carbon, increasing water infiltration, improving wildlife and pollinator habitat—all while harvesting better profits and often better yields.<sup>1</sup>

GOALS	ACTIONS
21) <i>Establish a soil health management program.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Provide soil analysis recommendations to 100 community members.</li> <li>B. Host 2 soil health focused workshops.</li> <li>C. Develop cost share opportunities focused on soil health practices, including: cover cropping, reduced tillage, permanent groundcover integrated into production fields, etc.</li> <li>D. Develop guidance resources for farm equipment use to protect soil health.</li> </ul>

## 6. Water Quality and Quantity

As a valuable and vital resource, water quality and quantity impact every sector of life. We will continue to provide education and technical assistance to all community members within our district that aims to inform and mitigate the individual’s impact to water quality and quantity. We strive for clean and plentiful drinking water, the upgrade of 303(d) listed stream segments to meet Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) pollution reduction targets and in-stream flow targets, and upgrades to commercial and recreational shellfish harvesting areas. To achieve these goals we partner with community members and local organizations to implement Best Management Practices, green stormwater infrastructure strategies, and other innovative actions to meet water quality and quantity goals. We also provide ongoing education to community members in our sensitive shellfish-producing areas across Thurston County.

GOALS	ACTIONS
22) <i>Improved shoreline conditions.</i>	A. Support healthy shellfish growing areas by providing education and guidance on shoreline BMPs for 20 homeowners.
23) <i>Reduce surface &amp; groundwater impacts from urban and rural land uses.</i>	A. Implement 2 conservation BMPs to reduce nutrient runoff.
24) <i>Improve water use efficiencies and water conservation strategies.</i>	A. Implement 2 conservation projects to support in stream flow targets.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/soils/health/>

- B. Develop 3 Irrigation Management Plans for local agricultural operations.

## District Operations Priorities, Goals and Actions

### 1. Community Outreach and Engagement

It is of foundational importance to the Thurston Conservation District to engage the community in active conservation and the regenerative use of natural resources. Through volunteer projects and participation in district programs and services, we seek to facilitate a strong relationship with community members in our area. By increasing our presence and continuously adapting to meet the communities’ needs, the Thurston Conservation District can provide effective conservation programs for working lands and community members.

GOALS	ACTIONS
<i>25) Build robust volunteer program to increase organizational impact and engagement.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Engage 100 community volunteers.</li> <li>B. Host 8 restoration work parties.</li> <li>C. Initiate 120 hours of community service to conservation.</li> <li>D. Support at least 10 youth through the Teens in Thurston volunteer network.</li> </ul>
<i>26) Build relationships with elected officials.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Host at least 1 field tour for elected officials.</li> <li>B. Present CD information and updates at 2 local jurisdiction meetings (ex. BOCC, City Councils, Port, School Boards).</li> <li>C. Connect with legislators at least twice annually.</li> </ul>
<i>27) Improve accessibility of CD information.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Develop relevant multi-lingual resources.</li> <li>B. Host 5 events appropriate for families and people of all ages.</li> <li>C. Showcase CD projects and programs on 3 local and TCD-owned media platforms.</li> </ul>
<i>28) Demonstrate the impact of our work to our community.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Host 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Harvest Festival to showcase TCD accomplishments and community partnerships.</li> <li>B. Publish an annual report of accomplishments.</li> <li>C. Publish a monthly newsletter of information, announcements and project success stories.</li> <li>D. Host a monthly podcast focusing on TCD programs and issues relevant to our community.</li> </ul>

## 2. Adult and Youth Conservation Education

The Thurston Conservation District seeks to provide in-depth natural resource conservation education to both youth and adults. Education is the first step to conservation. In collaboration with our partners, we provide workshops, on-site tours, training courses, and other events that help individuals become stewards of our shared natural resources. Providing education to youth education opportunities helps to create a lifelong stewardship ethic. Education fosters a strong connection with - and understanding of - natural resource conservation issues that can create future stewards of our local natural resources. We also strive to inform Thurston County community members about training and education opportunities by acting as a clearing house for information about natural resources and related topics.

GOALS	ACTIONS
<p><b>29)</b> Support the implementation of <u>South Sound GREEN's Vision for the Future</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Engage 1500 students in water quality testing.</li> <li>B. Educate 500 students through watershed and water quality related classroom lessons.</li> <li>C. Host 450 youth at Student GREEN Congress.</li> <li>D. Host 3 professional development opportunities for teachers to strengthen their knowledge of water quality, climate impacts, and local conservation issues.</li> <li>E. Engage 700 youth in Puget Sound Nearshore trips.</li> <li>F. Increase involvement in the South Sound GREEN program by 2 percent.</li> </ul>
<p><b>30)</b> Promote careers in natural resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Provide instruction to 1 secondary or college class.</li> <li>B. Offer service and alternative service opportunities for local AmeriCorps/service corps volunteers.</li> <li>C. Participate in Career Technical Educators Advisory Group</li> <li>D. Involve 50 students in the South Puget Sound Envirothon.</li> </ul>
<p><b>31)</b> Educate our community about natural resources conservation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Participate in 50 educational opportunities for our community (workshops, tours, trainings, tabling etc.).</li> <li>B. Engage 1,300 community members through our Annual Native Plant Festival.</li> </ul>

## 3. District Operations



As an organization, Thurston Conservation District operates in a transparent, inclusive, and ethical manner. We leverage funding from multiple sources to increase our conservation impact on the ground. We pride ourselves in accountable financial processes, diligent and wise use of public and private dollars, and clean audits. In addition, we will continue to find sustainable avenues to grow as an organization and increase our positive impact in Thurston County.

**GOALS**

**ACTIONS**

<p><b>32)</b> <i>Sustainable and consistent funding to achieve our mission.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Renew Rates and Charges in 2024 for a 10 year term.</li> <li>B. Demonstrate impact of current Rates and Charges funding in the community through support, programming, resources and outreach efforts.</li> </ul>
<p><b>33)</b> <i>Design and plan for TCD’s Conservation and Education Center.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Develop phased CEC development strategy including business plan, financial and communication strategies.</li> <li>B. Locate and engage in securing land by 2024.</li> </ul>
<p><b>34)</b> <i>Thurston CD Board and Staff represent our community and have the capacity to support its needs.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Ensure on-going professional development for all staff positions.</li> <li>B. Continue to practice inclusive recruitment strategies.</li> <li>C. Continue to support partnerships with Veterans organizations such as Vets on the Farm program, Veteran’s Conservation Corps, and Resilient Veterans.</li> <li>D. Hire to meet staffing needs identified in 2020-2025 Strategic Plan and 2024 Annual Budget.</li> </ul>
<p><b>35)</b> <i>Improve data management and internal tracking systems.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Utilize SmartSheet systems for programmatic and financial data tracking.</li> </ul>
<p><b>36)</b> <i>Improve office sustainability and lower TCD’s carbon footprint.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Move towards paperless practices.</li> <li>B. Purchase goods and services from local businesses first.</li> <li>C. Facilitate and support staff working from home to reduce carbon impacts from commuting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>37)</b> <i>Conduct transparent, accountable, and ethical operations.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Update Policies and Procedures Manual to reflect current practices and changes to governing laws.</li> <li>B. Timely responses to Public Disclosure Requests.</li> <li>C. Include opportunities for public involvement in organizational planning and budget processes.</li> <li>D. Maintain clean audits from the State Auditor’s Office.</li> <li>E. Develop an investment policy.</li> <li>F. Transfer to socially and environmentally responsible financial institutions.</li> <li>G. Engage in re-negotiations of CBA.</li> </ul>

## Thurston Conservation District: 2024 Budget

<b>Unrestricted Income Total</b>	<b>\$1,093,134</b>	<b>Unrestricted Expense Total</b>	<b>\$1,093,134</b>
<b>Unrestricted Income</b>	<b>\$1,093,124</b>	<b>Administrative Expenses</b>	<b>\$638,003</b>
Retail Sales	\$77,111	Administrative Salaries & Benefits	\$326,650
WSCC Implementation	\$128,935	Professional Services	\$74,672
Rates and Charges	\$562,182	Facility, Vehicles & Maintenance	\$156,271
Overhead	\$330,906	Supplies	\$10,799
Cash Surplus	-	Conferences, Training & Travel	\$34,462
		Insurance & Banking	\$35,150
		<b>Program Allocations</b>	<b>\$455,131</b>
		Local Food Production & Consumption	\$16,600
		Producer Support & Preservation and Expansion of Working Lands	\$1,000
		Water Quality & Quantity and Protection & Restoration of Ecosystems	\$7,159
		Soil Conservation & Health	\$39,227
		Community Outreach & Engagement	\$212,239
		Adult & Youth Conservation Education	\$47,870
		Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation and Other Strategic Plan Priorities	\$131,036
		<b>Savings</b>	<b>\$0</b>

Conservation & Education Center	-
Reserve Fund	-

<b>Restricted Income</b>	<b>\$5,380,792</b>	<b>Restricted Expense</b>	<b>\$5,380,792</b>
ASRP Riverbend	\$2,559,889	Salaries & Benefits	\$1,502,501
SRFB Cozy Valley	\$37,551	Overhead	\$312,436
Zangle Cove	\$48,776	Travel	\$24,192
ASRP Oregon Spotted Frog	\$22,122	Goods & Services	\$224,608
Lower Eld Bulkhead Removal	\$112,018	Construction & Landscaping	\$2,915,774
Livestock Technical Assistance	\$8,524	Cost Share	\$59,000
Skookumchuck Restoration	\$97,800	Contractual	\$342,281
Chehalis Flood Plain	\$97,800		
Shellfish Cost Share	\$8,878		
CREP	\$45,701		
NRI Cost Share	\$64,783		
Engineering	\$82,500		
Salmon Recovery Funding (SRF)	\$267,418		
Sustainable Farms and Fields (SFF)	\$109,393		
Forest Health & Community Wildfire	\$363,234		
Irrigation	\$16,961		
Regional Implementation Team	\$26,104		
GREEN Congress Sponsorship (SCC)	\$5,000		
ESRP Shore Friendly	\$246,757		
Olympia Urban Farmland	\$203,038		
	\$309,222		
Sentinel Landscape (SLP)			
One Tree Planted	\$309,222		
WCRRRI Prairie Enhancement	\$34,218		
WFC Meyer Phase 2	\$85,196		
Pierce Shellfish NTA	\$85,600		
VSP & VSP Cost Share	\$223,838		

**2024 Income Total**  
**\$6,473,926**

**2024 Expense Total**  
**\$6,473,926**

**Administrative Expense-to-Budget Ratio**  
**10%**

Frogs on the Farm	\$54,625
Restoring South Sound Prairies	\$74,100
South Sound GREEN	\$116,449