



Thurston Conservation District 2023 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 2023 Annual Work Plan links directly to the content and format of the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan and aligns with the adopted annual budget.

For more information, contact Sarah Moorehead, Executive Director 360.754.3588 smoorehead@thurstoncd.com

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 working 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 10 urban and suburban 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. Participate in 2 community meetings or conversations focused on providing information and opportunities within the Chehalis Basin Strategy. 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 10 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.

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 3 community gardens, tribal gardens, school gardens, or garden clubs. B. Provide technical assistance to 60 urban and suburban community members. C. Implement conservation BMPs on 5 farms within urban or urban growth areas.

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

- D. Host 2 workshops on backyard food production.
- A. Work with community partners 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 (ex. food banks, local jurisdictions).
- C. 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

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 the conservation of natural resources, the 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 25 participants.
- B. Develop 15 Individual Stewardship Plans (ISPs).
- C. Support community members through regulatory processes such as inspections and referrals.

10) *Support viable farms.*

- A. Connect producers to business planning and training courses and/or resources.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B. Connect local producers to consumers through online tools and marketing support. C. Support streamlined application and permitting processes for community members. D. Participate in upcoming reviews of Growth Management Act policies in all jurisdictions.
11) Increase support for forest stewardship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Facilitate the development of 4 forest management plans (FMPs). B. Support efforts to preserve working forest land. C. Participate in upcoming reviews of Growth Management Act policies in all jurisdictions.
12) Increase technical assistance to producers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Facilitate 150 site visits with producers. B. Provide technical recommendations on 300 BMPs.
13) Bridge the gap between retiring and beginning producers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Educate and connect real estate agents with farmland transfer programs. B. Provide resources to 10 new farmers. C. Increase outreach to landowners to share leasing opportunities via South Sound FarmLink D. Collaborate with existing land matching programs.
14) Support sustainable shellfish production.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Work with local shellfish producers to identify areas to support and innovative ideas.
15) Increase inventory and use of equipment rental service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Identify additional pieces of equipment needed by the community to expand TCD's rental program. B. Purchase a no-till drill to add to TCD's rental program. C. Plan hands-on training for no-till drill. D. Ensure appropriate use of the equipment by creating technically sound guidance documents for all equipment.

4. Protect and Restore Ecosystems

Thurston Conservation District recognizes the quantity and diversity of critical ecosystems within our region and strives to protect intact habitats, while also working to restore degraded areas. Thurston County is home to state and federally-listed endangered species, prairie ecosystems, vital marine, and estuarine habitats, 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
16) <i>Work with partners to protect critical habitat through restoration easements and habitat enhancement contracts.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Apply for funding to facilitate working lands easements in Thurston County. B. Strengthen partnerships with local accredited land trusts.
17) <i>Increase restoration of degraded habitat.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Create 2 site-specific pollinator habitat projects. B. Complete 1 wetland habitat enhancement project. C. Treat 60 acres of invasive species. D. Develop 10 planting plans. E. Provide habitat restoration technical assistance to 50 community members. F. Facilitate 100 site visits with community members focused on habitat restoration.
18) <i>Restore marine and freshwater habitats to support healthy aquatic species populations and functional floodplains.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Plant 4 acres of riparian habitat to support salmon recovery. B. Develop 2 restoration projects in freshwater systems with salmon runs. C. Support 30 shoreline community members to improve shoreline habitat. D. Remove 2 bulkheads on the marine shoreline.
19) <i>Enhance ESA-listed species habitat (plant & animal).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Work with 1 community member to improve Oregon Spotted Frog habitat. B. Host 1 Orca Recovery Day event to bring awareness to endangered salmon and orca populations. C. Work with 10 community members through VSP to support on-farm management and recovery of listed species.
20) <i>Develop a local riparian restoration cost-share program.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Work with local and state partners to secure funding for the local riparian restoration program.

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, and improving wildlife and pollinator habitat—all while harvesting better profits and often better yields.¹

GOALS	ACTIONS
<p>21) <i>Establish a soil health management program.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Provide soil analysis recommendations to 100 community members. B. Prepare 150 soil analysis recommendations. C. Prepare 10 plant tissue test reports. D. Host 2 soil health-focused workshops. E. Develop cost-share opportunities focused on soil health practices, including cover cropping, reduced tillage, permanent ground cover integrated into production fields, etc. F. Develop or update guidance resources for farm equipment use to protect soil health.

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 on 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
<p>22) <i>Improved shoreline conditions.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Support healthy shellfish growing areas by providing education and guidance on shoreline BMPs for 20 homeowners.
<p>23) <i>Reduce surface & groundwater impacts from urban and rural land uses.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Implement 5 conservation BMPs to reduce nutrient runoff.
<p>24) <i>Improve water use efficiencies and water conservation strategies.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Implement 2 conservation projects to support in-stream flow targets. B. Develop Irrigation Management Plans and offer irrigation management guidance for local agricultural operations.

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

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
<p>25) <i>Build a robust volunteer program to increase organizational impact and engagement.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Engage 100 community volunteers. B. Host 4 restoration work parties or events. C. Initiate 500 hours of community service to conservation. D. Support at least 20 youths through the Teens in Thurston volunteer network.
<p>26) <i>Build relationships with elected officials.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Host at least 1 field tour for elected officials. B. Present CD information and updates at 2 local jurisdiction meetings (ex. BOCC, City Councils, Port, School Boards). C. Connect with legislators at least twice annually.
<p>27) <i>Improve accessibility of CD information.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Develop relevant multi-lingual resources. B. Host 25 events appropriate for families and people of all ages. C. Showcase CD projects and programs on local and TCD-owned media platforms.
<p>28) <i>Demonstrate the impact of our work to our community.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Host the 2nd Annual Harvest Festival to showcase TCD accomplishments and community partnerships. B. Recognize partners and community members with the annual Community Awards program. C. Publish an annual report of accomplishments. D. Publish a monthly newsletter of information, announcements, and project success stories. E. Host a monthly podcast focusing on TCD programs and issues relevant to our community.

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>29) Support the implementation of <u>South Sound GREEN's Vision for the Future</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Engage 1500 students in water quality testing B. Educate 500 students through watershed and water quality-related classroom lessons C. Host 3 professional development opportunities for teachers to strengthen their knowledge of water quality, climate impacts, and local conservation issues. D. Increase involvement in the South Sound GREEN program by 2 percent.
<p>30) Promote careers in natural resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Provide instruction to 1 secondary or college class. B. Offer alternative service opportunities for local AmeriCorps/service corps volunteers. C. Participate in the Career Technical Educators Advisory Group
<p>31) Educate our community about natural resources conservation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Participate in 50 educational opportunities for our community (workshops, tours, trainings, tabling, etc.). B. Engage 800 community members through our Annual Native Plant Festival.

3. District Operations

As an organization, Thurston Conservation District operates transparently and ethically. 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>32) <i>Sustainable and consistent funding to achieve our mission.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Demonstrate the impact of current Rates and Charges funding in the community through support, programming, resources, and outreach efforts. B. Begin planning for 2024 Rates & Charges Renewal.
<p>33) <i>Design and plan for TCD’s Conservation and Education Center.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Set aside funding annually. B. Complete feasibility study and determine next steps to locate and engage in securing land by 2024.
<p>34) <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"> A. Ensure ongoing professional development for all staff positions. B. Continue to practice inclusive recruitment strategies. C. Continue to support partnerships with Veterans organizations such as Vets on the Farm program, Veteran’s Conservation Corps, and Veterans ETC. D. Hire to meet staffing needs identified in the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan and 2023 Annual Budget. E. Review and update the communications plan to encourage all cities in Thurston County to become part of the district boundaries.
<p>35) <i>Improve data management and internal tracking systems.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Utilize SmartSheet systems for programmatic and financial data tracking.
<p>36) <i>Improve office sustainability and lower TCD’s carbon footprint.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Move towards paperless practices. B. Increase efficiencies of District processes using SmartSheet and DocuSign. C. Purchase goods and services from local businesses first. D. Purchase/lease hybrid vehicles for District use. E. Facilitate and support staff working from home to reduce carbon impacts from commuting.
<p>37) <i>Conduct transparent, accountable, and ethical operations.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Update the Policies and Procedures Manual to reflect current practices and changes to governing laws. B. Timely responses to Public Disclosure Requests. C. Include opportunities for public involvement in organizational planning and budget processes. D. Maintain clean audits from the State Auditor’s Office and granting organizations.

- E. Submit clear, accurate financial reports and budgets to the Board.
- F. Submit the 2023 Annual Plan and SAO Annual Financial report timely and accurately.
- G. Relocate TCD offices and equipment.

Thurston Conservation District: 2023 Budget

Unrestricted Income Total	\$1,043,458	Unrestricted Expense Total	\$1,043,458
Unrestricted Income	\$733,124	Administrative Expenses	\$579,052
Retail Sales	\$51,524	Administrative Salaries & Benefits	\$294,000
WSCC Implementation	\$117,823	Professional Services	\$75,697
Rates and Charges	\$559,611	Facility, Vehicles & Maintenance	\$137,905
Overhead	\$263,500	Supplies	\$12,300
Cash Surplus	\$51,000	Conferences, Training & Travel	\$23,500
		Insurance & Banking	\$35,650
		Program Allocations	\$389,406
		Local Food Production & Consumption	\$14,000
		Producer Support & Preservation and Expansion of Working Lands	\$6,000
		Water Quality & Quantity and Protection & Restoration of Ecosystems	\$1,446
		Soil Conservation & Health	\$35,910
		Community Outreach & Engagement	\$179,125
		Adult & Youth Conservation Education	\$54,800
		Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation and Other Strategic Plan Priorities	\$98,125

Savings	\$75,000
Conservation & Education Center	\$37,500
Reserve Fund	\$37,500

Restricted Income	\$3,180,207	Restricted Expense	\$3,180,207
ESRP Shore Friendly	\$268,575	Salaries & Benefits	\$1,284,407
ASRP Independence	\$84,612	Overhead	\$248,003
ASRP Riverbend	\$655,070	Travel	\$51,515
SRFB Cozy Valley	\$104,520	Goods & Services	\$696,417
Zangle Cove	\$99,011	Construction & Landscaping	\$624,051
ASRP Oregon Spotted Frog	\$12,550	Cost Share	\$275,814
Livestock Technical Assistance	\$22,204		
Skookumchuck Restoration	\$95,741		
Chehalis Flood Plain	\$91,097		
Shellfish Cost Share	\$63,106		
CREP	\$78,555		
NRI Cost Share	\$27,431		
Engineering	\$12,670		
Meyer Salmon Recovery	\$36,355		
Riparian Outreach and Assessment	\$42,938		
Riparian Restoration (RRIP)	\$324,239		
Chehalis Lead	\$60,418		
Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP)	\$60,030		
VSP Cost Share	\$228,249		
Western SARE – Grassland Grazing	\$17,604		
Sentinel Landscape Partnership (SLP)	\$295,000		
WCRRI Prairie Habitat Enhancement	\$36,531		
DNR Wildfire Ready Neighbors	\$50,000		
Pierce/Thurston Shellfish NTA	\$66,000		

2023 Income Total
\$2,650,269

2023 Expense Total
\$2,650,269

Administrative Expense-to-Budget Ratio
14%

City of Olympia Community Gardens	\$129,500
Frogs on the Farm	\$8,445
USFWS Restoring South Sound Prairies	\$1,000
Zangle Cove PMEP	\$40,000
DOE Middle Deschutes	\$42,401
South Sound GREEN	\$126,355