

SUTTER COUNTY Resource Conservation District 2007-2012 Long Range Strategic Plan ADOPTED August 13, 2007)

Background: In Summer of 2007, the Sutter County RCD Team met to discuss and develop a 5-year strategic plan. Through an interactive process between the SCRCDD Staff and Board of Directors and the Natural Resources Conservation Service Yuba/Sutter District Conservationist and Assistant State Conservationist, nine natural resource goals were identified for District action.

The Long Range Strategic Plan is designed to meet the stated goals over a five-year period and will be used as a guide in the development of an annual action plans for the next five years.

Vision Statement: Be recognized as the reliable, knowledgeable local organization for conservation efforts in Sutter County by working cooperatively with landowners, partners, and other clients.

Mission Statement: Provide non-regulatory leadership for the management, use, protection, and/or development of soil, water, and other natural resources within Sutter County.

Goals, Actions, Key Decision Makers, and Funding Possibilities

1. Operation

Goals

- Adopt a business plan and related annual plans;
- Adopt annual plans, budgets, and activity calendars for each year;
- Have an annual fiscal year audit performed;
- Expand staff to include an Executive Director, Program Manager, Two Watershed Coordinators, Education Coordinator, Program Specialist, and Bookkeeper/Secretary;
- Grow to an annual budget of \$1million and secure baseline funding of \$150,000 per year;
- Convert financial apparatus from the County to a private bank;
- Develop a marketing strategy to promote District activities and services to include a new District website;
- Develop a fee-for-services program with the Sutter County;
- Develop a Technical Advisory relationship with Yuba County RCD;
- Establish an organized filing system; and
- Build and own a new USDA Service Center building.

Actions

- Write a long range business plan and related annual plans;
- Develop annual cash flow projections;
- Develop upgraded and refined business and personnel policies, procedures, and implementation strategies; and
- Develop instruction manuals for key positions;
- Build the website;
- Solicit support, begin a feasibility study, develop a preliminary budget, and scout for land for the Service Center;

Key Decision Makers

- SCRCD;
- County Supervisors;
- Sutter County Agricultural Commissioner;
- Sutter County Administrator;
- UCCE;
- State Legislators;
- CARCD Executive Director;
- FSA State Executive Director; and
- NRCS State Conservationist.

Funding

- Sutter County;
- California State Legislature;
- Fee for Services;
- Grants;
- Nelson Slough;
- Rentals from Service Center;
- Mitigation Banking;
- Easement Management;
- Jobs for other organizations; and
- Gifts and/or estates.

2. Education

Goals

- Talk to 15,000 people (youth & adult) about conservation through partnership activities with Ag in the Classroom, California Women for Agriculture, FFA, UCCE 4-H, and ¹SLEWS; and through outreach events including technical workshops, land owner BBQs, and a Day-in-the-District tour for land owners; and
- Establish a staff Education Coordinator position.

Actions

¹ Student and Landowner Education and Watershed Stewardship, a program of the Center for Land-Based Learning

- Develop an education strategy to include education programs;
- Write a concept paper for the Education Coordinator position; and
- Solicit financial support for educational events and activities.

Key Decision Makers

- School District Principals;
- Land owners through the local Farm Bureau;
- Partnership organizations; and
- Media outlets: Appeal Democrat and KUBA.

Funding

- Department of Conservation;
- NRCS and FFA;
- Farm Bureau;
- UCCE 4-H;
- California Women for Agriculture; and
- SLEWS.

3. Water Resource Quality, Quantity, and Availability

Goal

- Establish a 30% improvement in water quality and quantity through the continuation of BMP implementation and monitoring;
- By May 2012, help efforts to establish the availability of a regional water source through the construction of the Sites Reservoir.

Actions

- Support ²NODOS regarding the Sites Reservoir through solicitation letters to irrigation districts, affected Counties and Yuba City;
- Complete the SCRCD agricultural water quality grant for the Diazinon ³TMDL implementation;
- Network with NCWA;
- Network with the state water contractors; and
- Participate in the California Water Plan process.

Key Decision Makers

- Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger;

² The North-of-the-Delta off Stream Storage (NODOS) Investigation is a feasibility study being performed by the California Department of Water Resources and the Bureau of Reclamation. The NODOS Investigation is evaluating potential offstream surface water storage projects in the upper Sacramento River Basin.

³ TMDL is an acronym for Total Maximum Daily Load and is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards, and an allocation of that amount to the pollutant's sources.

- DWR Director Lester Snow;
- State Legislators;
- State Water Resources Control Board;
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board;
- State Water Contractors
- NCWA; and
- Land owners.

Funding

- DWR grant programs;
- Irrigation Districts;
- Regional Counties affected by the construction of Sites Reservoir;
- Local land owner participation through NRCS cost share programs for BMP implementation; and
- Other grants.

4. Agriculture Land Protection

Goal

- Identify farming operations that are potentially threatened by development and provide education on agriculture land preservation programs including conservation easements and transfer of development rights; and
- Successfully engage land owners and conservation entities regarding the development of a plan to provide conservation easements for 10,000 acres of farmland.

Actions

- Collect data on areas with prime farmland soils;
- Determine which local farming operations face development pressures;
- Conduct educational outreach on the issues to local growers;
- Coordinate and facilitate communications between local land owners and relevant government agencies that address development challenges; and
- Work with the American Basin Working Group.

Key Decision Makers

- Land owners;
- Dept. of Conservation;
- NRCS;
- American Basin Working Group; and
- Middle Mountain Foundation.

Funding

- California Farmland Conservancy Program (CFCP);
- NRCS Farm & Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP);
- NRCS Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP);
- American Farmland Trust; and

- Foundations.

5. Flood Protection, Levee Repair, Setbacks, and Flood Control

Goal

- By May 2012, 75% of the county will qualify for 100-year FEMA flood protection designation; and
- SCRCO will be involved in 10 private levee improvement projects.

Actions

- Draft a letter to the County Supervisors requesting a cooperative arrangement to achieve the stated goals;
- Organize, convene, and facilitate flood protection workshops;
- Outreach to land owners regarding possible levee projects; and
- Submit proposals to the DWR FloodSafe Program.

Key Decision Makers

- Land owners
- County Supervisors, Public Works Director, and County Administrator;
- DWR Grant Administrator;
- California Fish and Game;
- California Reclamation Board;
- U.S Bureau of Reclamation; and
- Army Corps of Engineers.

Funding

- County partnership to fund education and outreach efforts;
- Fee for service and/or cost share arrangement from individual land owners for private levee repairs;
- Grants: Prop 1E and 84; and
- Bureau of Reclamation, Water Conservation Program.

6. Conservation Planning

Goals

- Participate in NRCS Comprehensive RMS Conservation Planning;
- Participate in Oak Woodlands Management Planning;
- Continue to partner with the American Basin Working Group; and
- Develop a Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP) for the Sutter Buttes through engagement, facilitation, and mediation among all land owners and stakeholders in the region; and
- Establish partnership with other RCDs in promoting a Tahoe-to-the-Bay Watershed Management Plan.

Actions

- Meet with key decision makers, stakeholders, and land owners to determine what they want for the region;
- Work with NRCS to promote RMS Conservation Planning;
- Work with the ABWG;
- Work with other RCDs; and
- Meet with land owners and the State Parks and Recreation Department.

Key Decision Makers

- Land owners;
- County Supervisors;
- NRCS;
- ABWG;
- Other RCDs;
- Local California State Assembly representatives;
- Senator Sam Anestad;
- State Parks and Recreation;
- Existing Federal, State, and Local partnerships; and
- Middle Mountain Foundation.

Funding

- RCD and NRCS funds;
- Local Grants;
- Resources Agency; and
- Foundations.

7. Air Quality

Goal

- By May 2012, achieve a 30% reduction in PM-10 particulates through Best Management Practice (BMP) adoption by 50% of the land owners and through coordination with the Feather River Air Quality Management District and the State Air Resources Board.

Actions

- Develop a grassroots approach to address air quality issues in the region;
- Work with the Feather River Air Quality Management District to review air quality trends, sources, and recommendations;
- Bring together the key agricultural representatives with the Agricultural Commissioner and air quality leaders to review information & develop a implementation plan; and
- Work with growers on air quality conservation plans in group sessions and offer planning assistance. For those that have plans, begin using available programs to implement the plans.

Key Decision Makers

- Land owners: Almond and Walnut growers and other agriculture groups;
- Farm Bureau;
- Sutter County Supervisors and County level lead staff on air quality;
- Feather River Air Quality Management District;
- State Air Resources Board;
- Local EPA representative on air quality;
- NRCS, John Beyer; and
- CARCD, Ron Harben.

Funding

- Federal funding: NRCS EQIP & EPA cost share programs;
- Feather River Air Quality Management District;_and
- State Air Resources Board.

8. Wildlife Habitat

Goals

- Establish 1,000 acres of core refuge in the American Basin by partnering with the CA Joint Venture; and
- Protect up to 48,000 acres of Oak Woodlands for wildlife habitat in the Sutter Buttes and the Bear River region.

Actions

- Develop information to disseminate to identified audiences;
- Develop an Oak Woodland Management Plan (that includes pruning and clearing around oak trees to help prevent wildfire) and have the County Supervisors adopt the plan; and
- Identify and obtain American Basin lands for wildlife habitat protection.

Key Decision Makers

- Land owners;
- CA Joint Venture: American Basin Working Group Members;
- County Supervisors;
- Middle Mountain Foundation; and
- Other non profits.

Funding

- Land owners;
- CA Joint Venture;
- Department of Fish & Game, Oak Woodlands Protection Program; and
- Foundations.

9. Noxious and Invasive Weed Control

Goal

- By May 2012, help the local Weed Management Area be operational, funded, and functioning, leading to land owner support and education;
- Achieve 99% eradication of invasive water species in waterways; and
- Achieve a 10% eradication of land-based invasive species (yellow star thistle, puncture vine, purple loosestrife).

Actions

- Develop a management plan, including need, revenue & expense estimates;
- Develop a list of priority areas and landowners;
- Streamline permitting process; and
- Post information in the SCRCD newsletter and on the Web.

Key Decision Makers

- Land owners;
- County Agricultural Commissioner; and
- Irrigation district boards and the Water Master.

Funding

- Fee for services from land owners;
- County funding per acre; and
- Irrigation Districts funding per acre.