



# LEWIS & CLARK CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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790 Colleen Street • Helena, Montana 59601 • 406-449-5000 ext. 5

## Strategic Plan 2022-2026

### Mission Statement

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

### Future Vision

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

### Values

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

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

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

### EDUCATION

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

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

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

### OUTREACH/COMMUNICATIONS

**Goal: Improve public awareness and perception of value of LCCD and our programs**

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Develop and enhance CD brand and brand recognition through audience specific messaging
- Develop a catalog of 'success stories' for outreach purposes
- In 2023, use the 75th anniversary events to highlight the history and relevance of LCCD
- Actively engage in outreach activities in historically underserved areas of the county
- Continue development of website to improve resource access and navigability

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

## Goal #2-Projects and Programs

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

### PROJECTS

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

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

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

### PROGRAMS

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

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- In 2023, reassess cost share program and its implementation, taking into account budget and staff resources
- Oversee facilitation and maintenance of area Rolling Rivers trailer, including overseeing partner scheduling and educator training
- Continue LCCD Pollinator Initiative program, with particular focus on collaboration with entities such as Helena Community Gardens and the City of Helena

## Goal #3- Stream Permitting & Riparian Health

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

## **STREAM PROJECTS**

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

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Identify landowners interested in stream improvement projects and provide technical and/or funding assistance
- Develop pilot project prioritization matrix to maximize limited CD resources and overall project impact
- Collaborate with partners on stream improvement projects to best utilize limited CD resources
- Monitor long term effectiveness of projects by developing project verification process

## **FLOODPLAIN PERMITTING ISSUES**

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

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Continue work with the Montana Joint Stream Restoration Committee
- Work with representatives of MACD, NACD, FEMA and other agencies to streamline permitting process/requirements for small-scale restoration work on water resources

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

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

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Manage permit applications, complaints and emergencies and maintain a database of past and present applications
- Utilize site inspections as “value-added” opportunities for education on riparian health principles and general CD mission
- Work with agency partners to develop creative, cost-effective solutions to common stream resource issues

## Goal #4-Capacity Building

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

### **ORGANIZATIONAL INDEPENDENCE**

**Goal: Establish organizational independence through development of a Conservation Center**

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Work with Vulk family on negotiating agreement-Jan-June-2023
- Plan out phased development of center-Jan-Dec 2023
- Apply for grants or seek other funding for different project phases

### **BOARD DEVELOPMENT**

**Goal: Promote an involved and informed Board of Supervisors**

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Assess Supervisor training needs and provide training
- Identify individual board member interests and priorities for the CD to encourage participation
- Adhere to organizational priorities through the review of strategic and operational plans at board meetings on a quarterly basis and an annual planning meeting in December

### **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

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

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

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

## ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LONGEVITY

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

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Continue development of Policies and Procedures Manual that will improve staff and board transition over time
- Develop a plan for dealing with emergency situations (flood, fire etc.) that will allow the District to prioritize activities and functions during emergencies.
- Ensure that diversity, equity and inclusion are part of development of the board and staff
- Identify and obtain adequate funding for District objectives through grant programs, sponsorships, and potential incorporation of municipalities currently outside of LCCD jurisdiction
- Utilize the Big Sky Watershed Corps program to bolster gaps in organizational capacity and bring fresh perspectives to the District
- Strengthen existing partnerships and actively seek out new partners with shared organizational goals

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