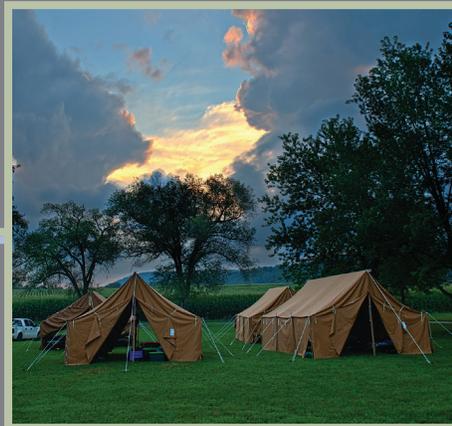




LANCASTER COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Strategic Plan

2020-2025 Year Strategic Plan



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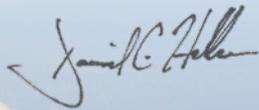
September 2020

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Many people have contributed to the development of this Strategic Plan. In particular, the authors would like to thank the work groups who spent many hours in discussion and writing of the initial documents to craft a realistic and practical plan. Thank you also to all those who aided this endeavor by taking the time to answer surveys or provide other information to the work groups. The attendance of the staff, directors, associate directors, advisors, and partners at the last two Annual Planning meetings was also greatly appreciated. Their thoughtful discussions and feedback made a robust plan possible. Special thanks to the administrative staff for assisting in several capacities. From note-taking to document preparation, your assistance was invaluable. The authors also recognize Justin Furnia whose IT assistance made virtual meetings and document access possible in the midst of a pandemic. The District is grateful to PACD for grant funding supporting this project.

The plan relies on the input from its many contributors; however, any errors in ideas or perspectives are those of the authors. The Lancaster County Conservation District is a vital and thriving public resource and leader in the conservation community working alongside many partners to protect the county's natural resources. It is the hope that this Strategic Plan will contribute to the District's continued success in these efforts.

Adopted September 2, 2020



Daniel C. Heller, Chair



Kent R. Weaver, Treasurer

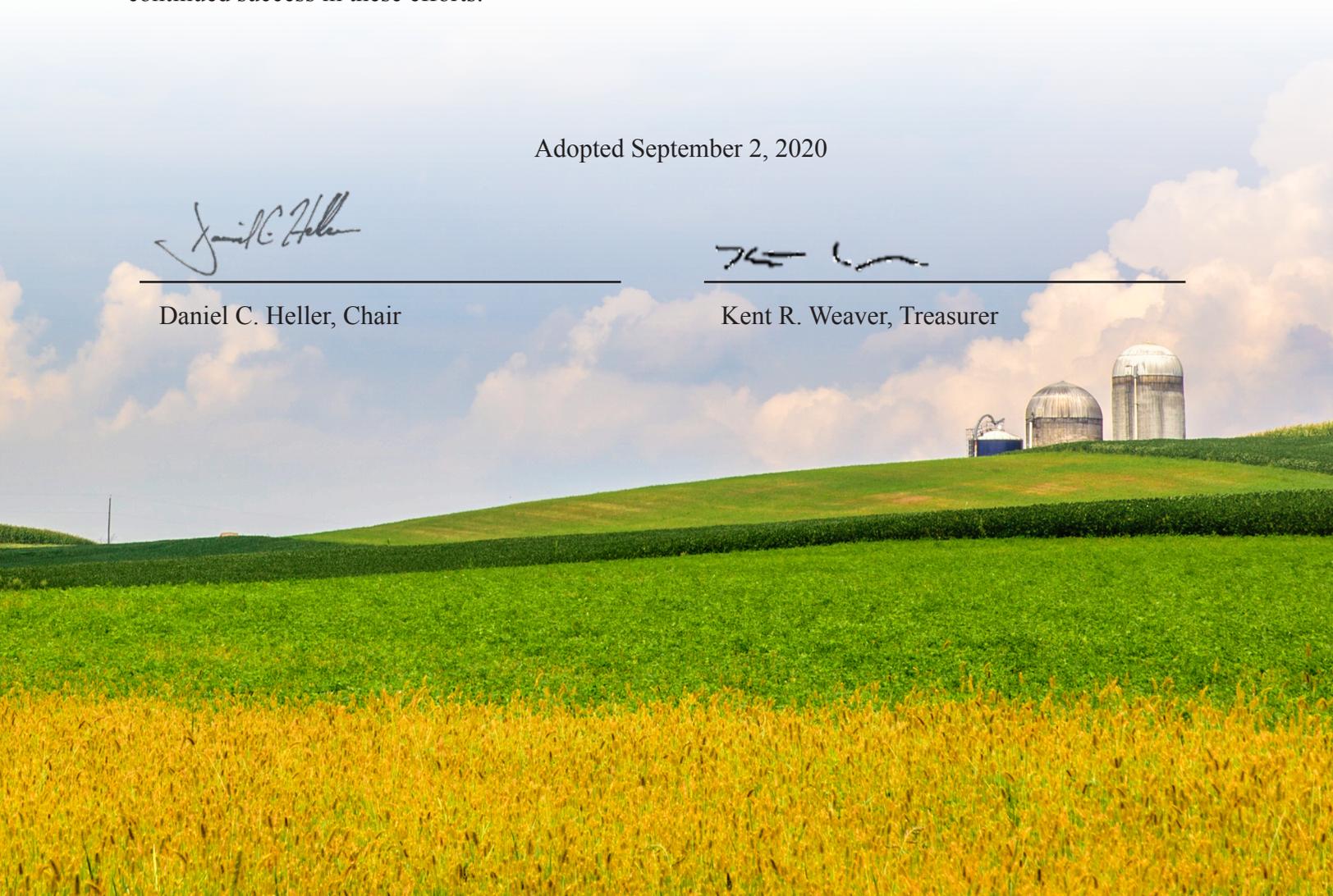


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Executive Summary

The crafting of the Lancaster County Conservation District's (LCCD or "The District") Five Year Strategic Plan has spanned the last two and a half years as staff and board members participated in multiple annual planning and work group meetings to refine the District's mission, vision, and strategic initiatives for 2020-2025. Through a phased approach, this plan refines the activities and procedures of the District to address Lancaster County's critical natural and social resources. In particular, Phase I of the plan focuses on the critical *natural resources* of water quality, soil erosion, and nutrient loss in alignment with the mission of the Conservation District. It also addresses the critical *social resources* of: education and outreach for community engagement, partnerships promoting common visions and shared resources, and funding for both conservation activities and District operations. The strategic plan's Phase II provides initiatives for improving District-wide operations to ensure continued high quality service to the county's residents. The following summary outlines all of the strategic initiatives and some highlights of various initiatives.



The Agriculture Program

This programmatic strategic plan for the agricultural department is an overview of the various efforts to improve water quality through reduced soil loss and improved nutrient management. It focuses on: bringing operators into compliance through renewed outreach, provision of voluntary assistance, and limited regulatory oversight; increased BMP implementation and new funding programs; changes to department structure; and renewed outreach. Implementation of the strategies needed to achieve these initiatives will begin at varying stages between now and 2025.

1. **Support & facilitate the general compliance of Lancaster County operators with federal, state, or local regulations through technical, planning, funding, and regulatory assistance.**
2. **Improve efficiency related to training, workflow, and funding opportunities to increase BMP implementation and outputs.**
3. **Promote outreach, education, & communication with operators.**
4. **Maintain and enhance partnerships with legislators and state & federal agencies.**
5. **Enhance relationships with industry partners and organizations.**



The Erosion & Sedimentation Program

The Erosion & Sedimentation (E&S) Program helps ensure that clients throughout the county follow regulations regarding new construction (Chapter 102) and water obstructions and encroachments (Chapter 105) through delegation agreements with PA DEP. The department works with consultants, landowners, operators, contractors, excavators, and municipalities to implement BMPs relating to erosion and sedimentation control and some stormwater management. The District provides reviews of projects seeking permit coverage as well as inspection of currently permitted projects to ensure clients follow the permit requirements. The District also provides responses to complaints received from the general public concerning earth disturbance activity, water obstructions, and encroachments throughout the county. This programmatic strategic plan focuses on improving district operations within the confines of the tightly regulated delegation agreements to better serve the public. Implementation of the strategies needed to achieve these initiatives will begin at varying stages between now and 2025.

- 1. Improve awareness and adherence of pa code title 25 chapter 102 and chapter 105 regulations among the regulated community.**
- 2. Foster good working relationships with members of the regulated community through professional development of E&S staff.**
- 3. Evaluate the erosion & sedimentation department's delegation agreements.**
- 4. Adopt & implement e-permitting for the 102 & 105 programs.**
- 5. Maintain an E&S department review fee structure that ensures the long-term sustainability of the department.**



Watershed Program

Over the last five years, Directors have taken steps to expand the watershed team to combat the negative impacts of degraded water quality. This District's watershed program provides a number of services (e.g. assistance with stream restoration, buffers, dirt & gravel road maintenance, water quality data collection, etc.) to landowners, operators, municipalities, and other stakeholders. The work done by the Watershed Team improves and maintains waterways and addresses land use activities that contribute to degraded stream quality. To expand these efforts, the work groups have identified a need for: more data through increased monitoring, greater implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs), more general awareness and knowledge of BMPs, and funding opportunities which allow landowners and others to install and maintain the needed BMPs. The intent of the programmatic strategic plan for the watershed department is to address these challenges in order to improve water quality locally and regionally. All initiatives directly or indirectly relate to the critical resource of water quality, and the plan also addresses the critical resources of partnerships, funding, and operations. Implementation of the strategies needed to achieve these initiatives will begin at varying stages between now and 2025.

- 1. Decrease the number of Lancaster County waterways classified as impaired by the Pennsylvania department of environmental protection through the increased implementation of bmps and educational efforts.**
- 2. Establish qualifying water quality data collection on Lancaster County waterways as support for delisting streams.**
- 3. Utilize effective and up-to-date conservation technology, equipment, and techniques as related to the work of the watershed department.**
- 4. Maintain existing funding sources and identify opportunities for new sources of funding.**
- 5. Evaluate the dirt & gravel/low volume road program.**
- 6. As criteria for this program continue to tighten, the district will need to evaluate its capacity to administer the program.**
- 7. Provide assistance to municipalities in meeting their municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) program permit requirements.**
- 8. Partner with organizations to achieve common watershed goals.**
- 9. Enhance communication, understanding, and engagement of the watershed department's importance work throughout the county.**



Education Program

The Education Program and Department (the Program) seeks to maintain the existing structure of the Program while enhancing aspects, such as public outreach, plain-sect outreach and education, communication, and fundraising. By taking the steps outlined below, the District’s Education program can continue to empower Lancaster County citizens, inspiring them to conservation action and engaging them in good stewardship. Strategies identified in this section also impact funding as a critical resource, as education efforts are intertwined with funding opportunities. Implementation of the strategies needed to achieve these initiatives will begin at varying stages between now and 2025.

- 1. Educate and empower critical audiences to take beneficial conservation actions (general public, youth & youth educators, and plain sect educators).**
- 2. Establish a sustainable funding plan for district education activities.**
- 3. Evaluate the development of an annual appeal in coordination with the conservation foundation of Lancaster County.**
- 4. Advance synergistic relationships with new and current partners to solidify the network of contacts, broaden the web of potential interactions, and connect with critical audiences.**



The Conservation Foundation of Lancaster County

The Conservation Foundation of Lancaster County was reviewed as part of the District's Strategic Planning Initiative, though it is not specifically a District Program. The Foundation and the District share board members and staff, and the Foundation acts as the nonprofit funding arm for the Conservation District as well as for other Lancaster County conservation initiatives. In the review of the Foundation, the work group focused on the Foundation's need to: build and maintain capacity for sustainable increases in activities, enhance communications and relationships with partners, and increase financial support for its activities and the organizations it serves. The critical resource issues that the Conservation Foundation addresses are funding and partnership, though their efforts indirectly impact all of the other critical resource issues, as well.

1. Address issues that the conservation foundation faces proactively.
2. Enhance administrative functionality to meet the growing needs of the district & county by adding staff capacity.
3. Increase support for district activities.
4. Foster increased leadership & dedication of the foundation board.
5. Continue to grow the foundation board by advancing the skills & leadership of the BOD.
6. Advance the internal operations of the foundation.
7. Identify underutilized funding opportunities.
8. Generate a steady funding stream for overhead and administration.
9. Define foundation roles & responsibilities within the partnership of Lancaster clean water partners & Lancaster county clean water consortium.
10. Improve coordination with partners who co-sponsor grants with the foundation.

District Operations

This section of the plan focuses on operational challenges and needs of the District based on recurring themes that arose across discussion of individual programs, as well as work group input and surveys of LCCD staff, the Board of Directors (BOD), and external partners (see Appendices 2,3, & 4). This section focuses on issues like staff retention, funding for operations, training and professional development, technology needs, continued board engagement, etc.

- 1. Improve staff retention.**
- 2. Continue to Develop Training Activities & Professional Development Opportunities. .**
- 3. Increase Board of Directors (BOD) Engagement & Foster Relationships between Staff & BOD. .**
- 4. Increase Staff Efficiency through Additional Administrative Support & Improved Communication. .**
- 5. Increase Information Technology (IT) Capacity.**
- 6. Improve Public Perception.**
- 7. Minimize Indiscriminate Mission Creep & Prepare for Decisive Expansion of Services.**
- 8. Develop selection criteria for accepting grants and for new program development.**
- 9. Evaluate the need for expansion to address post-construction stormwater more comprehensively.**

Strategic Plan Methodology

The crafting of the Lancaster County Conservation District's (LCCD or "The District") Five Year Strategic Plan has been an ongoing process spanning the last two and a half years. In late fall of 2018, an executive planning team formed to serve as a core group of planning decision makers. This included the Board of Director Chair, Vice Chair, LCCD Personnel Committee, Treasurer, and other key LCCD staff members. The team met prior to the designated all-staff planning meeting to choose priority focus areas and organizational topics to guide the January meeting conversation. It was determined that as part of the plan-writing process, LCCD would review and rewrite the mission and vision statements.

On January 15, 2019, LCCD staff, directors, and partner organizations met for the annual planning meeting to discuss the elements of a new five-year strategic plan. During this meeting, participants worked in break-out groups to summarize LCCD's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis). The groups also evaluated the mission and vision statements, providing feedback and proposing alternate statements for consideration.

Based on the insights from this meeting, the executive planning committee initiated a review of district programs (Phase I) and evaluation of internal operations and activities (Phase II) as the next strategic planning step. Five work groups met regularly from October 2019 through April 2020 to revise the District's mission & vision, draft programmatic strategic plans, and identify operational needs. Each work group consisted of a team lead (board member) and two to three staff from different departments. Groups met individually for research, interviews of program managers/staff, etc. and as a collective to recount progress and discuss ideas.

Phase I (October 2019-January 2020)

Work groups were assigned a District Program: Agriculture, Education, Erosion & Sedimentation, Watershed, & Conservation Foundation of Lancaster County (henceforth, the Foundation or the Conservation Foundation) and asked to evaluate their respective programs in the context of four overarching goals. These four goals were identified as themes from the 2019 Annual Planning Meeting by the executive planning committee.

- Enhance Natural Resource Conservation through review & redefinition of program activities (e.g. What services does this program offer? Are those programs effective?).
- Build & Maintain Capacity for Sustainable Increase in Activities.(e.g. What is needed to "do the job"?).
- Increase Financial support needed for long-term stability & growth (e.g. What fiscal resources are needed?).
- Maintain & enhance communications & relationships with partners (E.g. How should LCCD interact with other entities?).

Each group then answered a series of questions (see Appendix 1) to identify objectives, strategies, and tactics needed for their respective programs to achieve the 4 overarching goals and address the critical resources. Using this information, the workgroups crafted programmatic strategic plans, identifying timelines and designating specific parties responsible for implementing the plans. Program managers participated in interviews and reviewed the working versions of the programmatic strategic plans. On February 5, 2020, the programmatic strategic plans were critiqued during the 2020 Annual Planning Meeting by the remaining board members and the entire LCCD staff. After the meeting, the work groups revised their programmatic plans for incorporation into the final strategic plan document. During Phase I, the work groups synthesized the mission and vision statements suggested at the 2019 Annual Planning meeting. The BOD approved the new vision and mission statements on November 6, 2019.

Phase II (January 2020-April 2020)

Phase II focuses on operational challenges and needs of the District. This portion of the strategic plan is based on recurring themes that arose across programs during Phase I, as well as work group input and surveys of LCCD staff, the Board of Directors (BOD), and external partners (see Appendices 2, 3, & 4).

The work groups met at the end of January to discuss the phase I challenges that transcend a particular program and brainstorm solutions to these and other issues that impact the District's operational needs. Following this meeting, the surveys were released through February of 2020. The staff survey was used to identify additional operational concerns and solutions. The BOD survey released to the directors and associate directors was used to prioritize identified operational issues and further clarify program activities. A third survey was released to partners to better understand expectations and perceptions of the District and its activities. These responses helped inform District priorities and reinforced the value of certain activities.

After the survey results were compiled, the work groups met remotely in April to review and discuss them. This time was used to prioritize the identified challenges, vet survey-proposed solutions, and identify additional solutions. Some time was also spent discussing the BOD & partner surveys and the use of that content.

Following the April convening of the work groups, the executive committee met to determine the structure of the final document and assign writing tasks to members of the work groups. A completed plan draft was circulated among the staff and the BOD for comment. Revisions were made prior to board approval on September 2, 2020.

District Mission

For over 70 years the purpose of the Conservation District has been to increase awareness of the relationship between human activities and our natural environment. The District helps to focus attention on the wise use of the land, water, and related natural resources. It provides assistance to individuals and public and private organizations in solving the complex problems of our environment.

Mission Statement

To promote the stewardship of natural resources for Lancaster County and beyond.

Vision Statement

The Lancaster County Conservation District will be a respected leader of conservation efforts in the county, trusted to engage and guide the community through proactive education, advocacy, and the administration of innovative stewardship principles.

District Philosophy

The Lancaster County Conservation District operates under the philosophy that the best way to advance the cause of conservation is to educate local citizens to become better environmental stewards. By building partnerships, providing technical assistance, and sharing information, we strive to achieve environmental compliance using common sense to build a culture of responsible stewardship.

Critical Resource Issues

Water Quality

In Lancaster County, there are more than 1,400 miles of streams and creeks. Nearly 50% of these waterways are impaired or polluted, according to the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and more waterways are projected to be negatively impacted by the county's land use activities. Many factors jeopardize the county's water quality: urban and residential stormwater runoff, public waste water management, agricultural activities, active construction activities, etc., all of which contribute in some way to sediment and/or nutrient loading in our waterways. Lancaster County contributes 27.2 million pounds of nitrogen and 1.3 million pounds of phosphorus each year¹.

Nutrient and sediment-laden streams inhibit recreation, degrade habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms, and can pose a threat to the public health and livelihoods of Lancaster County residents and their downstream neighbors. Lancaster City is less than 50 miles up the Susquehanna River from the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, and the Susquehanna River contributes 50 percent of the fresh water supply to the Chesapeake Bay². This means that both point and nonpoint source runoff generated within the county will quickly enter the Chesapeake Bay, one of the most important estuaries in the world.

To combat the negative impacts of degraded water quality, the District's watershed program provides a number of services (e.g. assistance with stream restoration, buffers, dirt & gravel road maintenance, water quality data collection, etc.) to landowners, operators, municipalities, and other stakeholders. The work done by the Agricultural (Ag.) and Erosion & Sedimentation (E&S) departments complement the Watershed Team's efforts to improve and sustain waterways, but like most conservation initiatives, progress is slow. The need for more data through increased monitoring, increased implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs), general awareness and knowledge of BMPs, and funding opportunities can all limit water quality improvement. The watershed department along with the other District programs must address these challenges in order to improve water quality locally and regionally.

Soil Erosion & Nutrient Loss

Known as the "Garden Spot of the America", Lancaster County has the most productive non-irrigated soils in the US, yet soil loss from agricultural activities, building-sites, and road construction/maintenance activities continues to be one of the most pressing resource issues in the county. Each year, Lancaster County suffers the loss of approximately 914.3 million pounds of sediment³, making soil loss the most prominent pollutant in Lancaster County waterways. This soil loss also poses a severe problem for agriculture which relies on the presence of healthy soils and sufficient nutrients which wash away as fields and barnyards erode.

Working to stabilize soil and maintain healthy, productive soils and keep nutrients where they'll be most beneficial is one of the top priorities of the Conservation District, but there are challenges that impede these efforts. In the agricultural program, there is an ever-growing need for continued technical assistance for Best Management Practices (BMPs) planning, design, and implementation from the District and private consultants. But even with increased technical assistance capacity, funding remains a challenge. Many Lancaster County farmers, dairymen in particular, are struggling to get by, making agricultural BMP funding an important factor in controlling erosion and the nutrient runoff referenced above. Without increased technical and financial assistance, farmers who want to be good stewards of their natural resources may not always be able to afford to do so. Another challenge is that not all operators are aware of or care about their role in reducing soil erosion or nutrient runoff. The growing gap between innovative farmers who voluntarily adopt BMPs and recalcitrant farmers whose operations do not meet state standards hinders this county's steps forward.

But soil loss is not only impacted by agricultural activity. Sedimentation occurs when unstable stream banks (due to ag. activity, municipal management, increased stormwater runoff, etc.) slough off during heavy weather events. Sedimentation and other pollutants can also enter streams from unpaved and low-volume roads in need of maintenance or acting as drainage carriers. Soil loss also occurs in the realm of construction and building activities, which by default causes earth disturbance. The existence

1 Sauro, Sean. "Plant Sale Aims to Help Lighten Lancaster County Waterways Pollution Load." Lancaster Online, February 26, 2020. Accessed July 21, 2020. https://lancasteronline.com/news/local/plant-sale-aims-to-help-lighten-lancaster-county-waterways-pollution-load/article_19b2d5a6-5814-11ea-a7d5-0fd0fe0462fd.html.

2 Felver, Rachel. "Who Is Responsible for the Conowingo Dam? Chesapeake Bay Program Takes Innovative Approach to Address Pollution from Conowingo Dam." Chesapeake Bay Program. Science. Restoration. Partnership., March 23, 2018. Accessed July 21, 2020. https://www.chesapeakebay.net/news/blog/who_is_responsible_for_the_conowingo_dam.

3 Clean Water Partners. "Highlights About Lancaster's Strategy for Restoring Our Local Waterways." Chesapeake Bay Office, January 14, 2019. Accessed July 21, 2020. <http://files.dep.state.pa.us/Water/ChesapeakeBayOffice/WIP/2019/L3 - Lancaster Narrative for State Steering Committee.pdf>.

of the Erosion and Sediment (E&S) Control Program serves to ensure that clients implement state-required practices to reduce soil loss. Rapid urban and suburban development throughout the county presents unique challenges in ensuring all operators and contractors are following the applicable regulations and utilizing best management practices. Employees in the E&S Department are faced with learning the complexities of the applicable programs while working with consultants, operators and contractors to achieve compliance through voluntary participation and formal enforcement actions.

Education & Empowerment to Take Conservation Actions

Apathy, ignorance, and distrust can stymie conservation efforts, but education and outreach are key to instilling citizens with a sense of responsibility toward the environment and empowering them to engage in conservation activities benefiting local citizens and downstream neighbors. Education and outreach have always been major components of District activities that dates back to the time of the dust bowl. Volunteer board members were the first educators of the Conservation District. In 1996, the Education Coordinator position was established providing more formalized educational opportunities working in tandem with cooperating agencies.

Today, the District's Education program takes a "watershed approach" to learning; it looks to reach critical youth and adult audiences to allow environmental education to flow into all aspects of motivating conservation activities. In the same way that focused efforts in small tributaries impact the larger Chesapeake Bay, so too do focused education efforts serve to build understanding and enthusiasm among the broader community as audiences share new knowledge with family and friends. This approach allows conservation concepts to flow through generations and accumulate in communities, inspiring conservation actions. Critical audiences include Plain Sect producers, students, teachers, and watershed residents. One of the greatest obstacles to education and outreach is continued funding. Other obstacles include staff availability and training to incorporate education into every-day activities for staff who work outside of the education program.

Funding Assistance for Conservation Activities

As an agency supporting county residents, the Conservation District is different from many partnering private companies and nonprofit organizations in that funding comes from a variety of sources. The District is granted funds from federal, state, and local governments along with private and public grants and individual donations. Challenges arise when funding sources end or are modified. When specific funding ends, the activities it supported may still be needed by the community, and the District must find alternative means of support. When funding is modified, the District may need to find supplemental or alternative funding if the modifications do not align with the District's mission or fail to adequately support District activities. New funding opportunities for specific programs or activities may exert pressure on the District to accept funds to support one program area, overstressing the District's capacity to continue original activities.

Economic and regulatory influences outside the Conservation District also have an impact on District activities. For example, falling milk prices may deter producers from installation of best management practices, and cost-share programs become crucial to achieving agricultural conservation. In a positive example, support needed for invasive species control like the spotted lanternfly has led to funding for education and control methods.

Partnerships

The Conservation District is a leader in conservation innovations with a willingness to collaborate and build partnerships to accomplish projects and programs. Partner organizations look to the District to provide technical, education, and regulatory support for a myriad of conservation issues. In turn, the District benefits from partnerships with like-minded organizations where shared resources increase conservation management, practices, and education available in the county. Collaboration also brings opportunities to introduce the benefits of the Conservation District to new audiences. Strengthening existing relationships and finding new collaboration opportunities is critical to the District's efforts.

Critical District Operations

Internal operations that include both staff and board engagement are critical to achieving the work of the Conservation District. Communications for staff and the Board of Directors (BOD) has changed rapidly in the last 5-7 years. New technologies, new staff expectations, and new Conservation District projects have influenced the types of communications between staff and between staff and board members. Some influences have led to miscommunication or lack of communication while others have exposed new opportunities for improved communication. The aforementioned factors have also influenced the operational needs of the staff (funding for staff support, office space, administrative support, training opportunities, etc.). These needs must be regularly evaluated and addressed to adequately provide for the staff and BOD so they can work together to better serve the District's mission.

Agriculture Strategic Initiatives

This programmatic strategic plan for the agricultural department is an overview of the various efforts to improve water quality through reduced soil loss and improved nutrient management. It focuses on increased BMP implementation and new funding programs, changes to department structure, and renewed outreach. It addresses elements of all of the critical resource issues.

Strategic Initiative 1 (Agriculture):

Support & facilitate the general compliance of Lancaster County operators with federal, state, or local regulations through technical, planning, funding, and regulatory assistance.

The intent of this initiative is to support operators in their efforts to achieve and remain in compliance with the various regulations which govern agriculture with the purpose of conserving natural resources. That support may entail technical or financial assistance for the planning or implementation of BMPs, plan verifications, and some regulatory oversight, where appropriate. By identifying operations that do not meet regulatory requirements *and by* providing planning, technical, and financial assistance to meet or surpass requirements, the District helps operators achieve improved stewardship of the county's soil & water resources. This initiative provides an overview of the various agricultural efforts needed to improve water quality through reduced soil loss and improved nutrient management.



KEY INDIVIDUALS:

- ↔ Board of Directors
- ↔ Team Leads
- ↔ Agriculture Department Manager
- ↔ Ombudsman
- ↔ District Manager
- ↔ Compliance Coordinator/Team
- ↔ District Agriculture Staff



GOAL 1: Improve Planning Outputs to get high quality plans on every farm.



WHEN: Begin by December 2020, maintain through 2025.



TACTICS:

1. Continue to provide District-written plans.
 - ↔ On average, produce 30 district-written Ag E&S plans or conservation plans per year.
 - ↔ Prioritize conservation or Ag E&S plan writing to accommodate strictly on need/request basis such as contracts, Ag. Preserve, FSA, etc.
 - ↔ Formalize planning standards to include writing or updating a Manure Management Plan (MMP) for operators who do not have an existing Manure Management Plan or Nutrient Management Plan, as applicable.
 - ↔ Support funding/programs that support and document high quality planning by TSPs to help alleviate some of the planning pressures on District staff.
2. Create a "Letter of Understanding" that outlines the commitment of the operator requesting plans to complete the process from plan development through the BMP implementation phase, and if the process is not completed, they should expect follow-up from the compliance department.
3. Engage more potential clients through a "Meet the Planner" field day event co-sponsored with other organizations and consultants to help connect farmers to technical service providers.
 - ↔ Potential partners include Ag. Council, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, PA No-Till Alliance, etc.
4. Reinforce the municipal MOU that requires plan verification by the municipality before issuing building permits.
 - ↔ Review and update the MOU as needed.
 - ↔ Include emphasis on this portion of the MOU at each regularly scheduled meetings for MOU renewal.



GOAL 2: Continue & Increase Adaptation and Innovation within Agriculture and Agricultural Regulations.



WHEN: Begin December 2020, maintain through 2025.



TACTICS:

1. Promote & adapt new techniques and processes in agriculture, making sure to gather information about: which processes will and will not meet conservation goals, if they will protect valuable resources, how new technologies will affect existing BMPs, which technologies will help operators achieve or exceed compliance with regulations and/or reduce the need for increased future regulation.
 - ↪ E.g. Promote practices/technologies (like manure injection) that will achieve county goals to reduce field applied manure rates.
2. As local agriculture trends towards more organic farming for various reasons, there is concern for increased tillage and soil erosion.
 - ↪ District must adapt to this and be able to aid this transition in the form of soil conservation outreach programs (potential for no-till organic equipment program similar to no-till tobacco planter program), different BMP systems and combinations.
 - ↪ Explore potential partner relationships with organizations such as the No-till Alliance.



GOAL 3: Continue to Administer the Act 38 Nutrient Management Program & Chesapeake Bay Compliance Programs.



WHEN: Begin July 2020 and continue through 2025.



TACTICS:

1. Achieve delegated goals by following SCC Nutrient Management Protocol.
2. Continue to participate in Bay Compliance Level I and launch Level II Bay Compliance.
3. Evaluate capacity and participation in Level II Bay Compliance at each delegation renewal.
4. During interactions with operators through program activities, encourage the use of innovative technologies and practices to achieve the county's goals of reducing surface applied manure.



GOAL 4: Increase Technical Assistance for BMP Implementation to Continue to Meet Delegation Agreement Obligations and WIP Targets.



WHEN: Ongoing through 2025.



TACTICS:

1. Secure and administer \$3-5 million annually for Ag BMP implementation.
 - ↪ Implement the Conservation Excellence Grant program and evaluate for long-term feasibility.
 - ↪ Implement DEP Bay Compliance Implementation funding when parameters and funds are provided.
 - ↪ Continue using Exelon funding as needed unless workload capacity is exceeded, then consider shifting the extra funds to the watershed department.
 - ↪ Pursue additional private funding for the on-the-ground work and/or the operation costs associated with implementing BMPs.

Strategic Initiative 2 (Agriculture):

Improve Efficiency related to Training, Workflow, and Funding Opportunities to Increase BMP Implementation and Outputs.

This initiative focuses on internal Ag. department activities needed for implementing the efforts described above. This section focuses specifically on design for new funding programs, improved training, and changes to department structure. Though some District activities (e.g. Nutrient Management) are consistent and predictable, there are many unknowns for new programs, and the guidance below is meant to generate a flexible framework in which the program managers and District board can adjust the departments structure and activities to respond to various regulatory and economic pressures. This initiative addresses the following critical resources: water quality, soil loss, funding assistance, and district-operations.

- KEY INDIVIDUALS:**
- ↔ Agriculture Department Manager
 - ↔ District Manager
 - ↔ Agricultural Staff
 - ↔ Team Leads
 - ↔ Board of Directors
 - ↔ Information Technology

GOAL 1: Evaluate Protocol/Process as it Pertains to BMPs & Project Numbers/Types.

 **WHEN:** Begin July 2020 and complete by 2023.

TACTICS:

1. Set a threshold number of projects that the District will handle before looking into outsourcing projects so that funding can keep moving into the County. Establish a protocol for:
 - ↔ What projects could be outsourced?
 - ↔ Where operators will be directed and how they will be directed?
 - ↔ What quality assurance measures/standards will be necessary?
2. Expat meetings within state guidelines by July 2021 .lore funding opportunities to ensure adequate engineering and technical staff to achieve program-specific BMP goals.
3. Evaluate & identify inefficiencies within internal Ag. operations & create action plans to address them by 2025, and evaluate every three years.
4. Establish metrics to define and measure success.

GOAL 2: Design & Implement the Conservation Excellence Grant Program & Cost-share Programs.

 **WHEN:** Begin by July 2020 and complete by July 2022.

TACTICS:

1. Continue to develop BMP project ranking system and test the system with mockup projects.
2. Continue to generate/revise the necessary forms for BMP project application and ranking.
3. Since operators are expected to submit applications in “ready-to-go” form:
 - ↔ Establish what “pre-application processes” services the District will provide.
 - ↔ Establish who the District will direct operators to for assistance and quality assurance standards.
4. Train staff for work within the Conservation Excellence Grant Program.
 - ↔ I&Es, Applications, Ranking, marking to producers, etc.

GOAL 3: Continue to Refine Technician Training Process.

 WHEN: Begin by July 2020 and complete by July 2021. Review annually.

TACTICS:

1. Formalize training system with baseline BMPs and projects for new hires to learn Ag. E&S planning and BMP implementation more quickly.
 - ↪ Set tiered goals (number &/or types at 3, 6, 9, 12 months, etc.) for learning BMPs to help accelerate growth and use for evaluation in setting goals for upcoming years.
 - ↪ Review tiers and use for evaluation in setting goals for upcoming year(s).
 - ↪ As technicians demonstrate proficiency in various areas, expand their job authority or reduce oversight, as appropriate, at each review.
2. Continue to utilize the nutrient management and conservation planning training and identify training opportunities for new programs such as conservation techniques or emerging crops.
3. Generate or revise PK3 training materials (including real examples and protocols), and make these files accessible to new/current employees.
4. Ensure employees have access to DEP Clean Water Academy Training.
5. Revisit LCCD Mentor Program as a vehicle to move staff through the training process.
 - ↪ Evaluate the role of a mentor based on department needs and staff availability.
 - ↪ Consider mentor by project-type (e.g. different mentors instruct in different project areas).
 - ↪ Mentor teaches skills and does quality assurance for projects but doesn't track individual progress.
 - ↪ Evaluate the compensation for mentors.

GOAL 4: Revisit the “Super-Tech” position and regional territories to increase project capacity.

 WHEN: Evaluate July 2021, make changes 2023, refine by July 2025.

TACTICS:

1. Continue and strengthen cross training of staff so they are prepared for a variety of project types.
2. Evaluate workload and skills of staff to more clearly define focus, taking into account:
 - ↪ Current and future projects,
 - ↪ Regional vs. inter-regional teams,
 - ↪ Specialized technicians with PE gatekeeper across programs and funding streams,
 - ↪ Outsourcing based on District and partner capacity,
 - ↪ Review & compliance vs. technical & planning services,
 - ↪ Staff retention.
3. Evaluate staff capacity and refill vacant staff positions as needed.

Strategic Initiative 3 (Agriculture)

Promote Education & Outreach/Communication.

This strategic initiative directly addresses the critical resource of education and outreach within the agricultural community (plain sect and traditional). This purpose of outreach is not necessarily to increase the workload of district staff, but rather to increase awareness of: the direct personal benefits of conservation, innovative BMPs and funding opportunities, and conservation obligations and corrective actions. By providing information that matches operators to their needed resources, the District facilitates good stewardship of soil, nutrient, and water resources.



KEY INDIVIDUALS:

- Information Technology
- Agriculture Department Manager
- Plain-Sect Outreach
- Education & Outreach
- Information Technology Committee
- District Agriculture Staff
- Team Leads
- Compliance Staff
- District Staff
- District Manager



GOAL 1: Promote Communication with Producers & Advance Compliance Outreach.



WHEN: Begin by July 2021 and continue through 2025.



TACTICS:

- Create a marketing plan for Ag Programs as a county resource.
 - Identify and select additional high-impact/high-efficiency outreach opportunities specific booths such as: 3 local fairs, Keystone International Livestock Expo, Farmshow, 4H, and 4R events to further connection with the general public on topics such as compliance, planning, and implementation, pending Covid-19 precautions.
 - Establish a target number of annual events to have District presence.
 - In collaboration between the Ag. and E&S departments, submit one informational article to periodicals every quarter to connect with partners and operators. E.g. Lancaster Farming, “Busy Beaver” local plain-sect newspaper, PA Environmental Digest Blog, etc.
- Sponsor/co-sponsor 1-2 more workshops and field days focused on implementing BMPs, pertaining to topics such as how to get started using BMPs to correct conservation issues, what properly implemented BMPs look like, funding opportunities, etc.
- Generate and distribute a compliance checklist tool that operators can use to determine their specific compliance with state standards by July 2021.
 - Make available online and through mailings with additional information available upon request by September 2021.
 - Determine how in-depth the checklist and additional information resources must be.
- Generate a list of funding opportunities (both government and private) for producers and partners as part of compliance mailings, website, newsletter, postcards, and email by February 2021.
 - Utilize advertisement space in Lancaster Farming, “Busy Beaver” local plain-sect newspaper, PA Environmental Digest Blog, Lancaster County Business Directory, and other periodicals.



GOAL 2: Evaluate the General Plain Sect Outreach Program.



WHEN: Begin by July 2021 and continue through 2025.



TACTICS:

- Evaluate the need for continued targeted outreach to the Plain Sect community at the current level by January 2021.

2. Plan & host a biannual meeting of plain sect leadership to review responsibilities & operations. First meeting by last quarter of 2021.
3. If continuing targeted plain sect outreach at current or increasing levels, then:
 - ↻ Implement a quality assurance review process for Manure Management Plans written by LCCD similar to that of the Ag. E&S plan review process.
 - ↻ Increase outreach to the underserved organic Plain-Sect community by identifying at least two new partners/ contacts within the organic community, and one or more new presentation opportunities by 2022.
 - ↻ Develop new materials (at least one PowerPoint or similar media and one factsheet, etc.) to address the challenges and barriers to traditional conservation practices faced by the Plain-Sect organic community by 2022. Continue developing new outreach materials as needed.
 - ↻ Look for opportunities to collaborate with the Education Department to reach new sectors of the Plain Sect Community (e.g. children & educators). See the Education Section, Strategic Initiative 3, Goal 3.



GOAL 3: Recognize and Acknowledge the Good Work Done by Farm operators to Encourage Other Farm Operators and/or the Public.



WHEN: Begin by July 2020 and continue through 2025.



TACTICS:

1. Identify one to two success stories or projects per year and publicly acknowledge them.
 - ↻ Pursue a press release, newspaper op-ed, Lancaster Farming story, PA Environmental Digest Blog, or contact journalists to do a highlight article.
 - ↻ Take precautions for concerns of confidentiality and anonymity.
2. Actively nominate Lancaster operators for local, regional, and national conservation awards.
 - ↻ Generate a list of annual award opportunities with selection criteria and approximate timelines.
 - ↻ Develop outline for staffing expectations & process for nominating operators, considering the following:
 - ↻ Committees vs. individual staff,
 - ↻ Letters of support, other needs, etc.,
 - ↻ How to approach operators about the awards.



GOAL 4: Adopt use of a Customer Relationship Management System (CRM system) to track contacts & opportunities.



WHEN: Begin by July 2021, complete through 2023, and continue through 2025.



TACTICS:

1. Secure funding for the CRM system.
2. Integrate a CRM into daily work activities and PracticeKeeper to keep track of operators and landowners.
 - ↻ Incorporate a list of common partners/opportunities into the CRM.
 - ↻ Incorporate existing Plain-sect Outreach contact list into the CRM and/or PK3.
 - ↻ Identify staff to be responsible for updating the CRM updated annually to ensure its functionality.
3. Generate an Ag list-serve to share programs, funding opportunities, technician-specific services, service regions, new-hire information, etc. to be shared on an Agriculture Program webpage.

Strategic Initiative 4 (Agriculture)

Maintain and enhance partnerships with Legislators and State & Federal Agencies.

Partnerships with legislators, and state and federal agencies benefit District activities through regulatory and funding support. These partnerships are crucial to District activities and county conservation; At times, weakened partnerships or a dearth of communication can also hinder the conservation work of the District and similar conservation organizations. In order to thrive, the District must both utilize these relationships and offer its services to regulatory partners in pursuit of a shared goal of serving the county.



KEY INDIVIDUALS:

↔ District Manager

↔ Program Managers & some Ag. Staff

↔ Ombudsman & Education Coordinator

↔ Board of Directors



GOAL 1: Act as a resource of local and practical knowledge.



WHEN: Begin January 2021 and continue through 2025.



TACTICS:

In collaboration with PACD, the Ag. Council, etc., sponsor or co-sponsor events for legislators and other governmental figures providing them with farm tours, activities, or simulations to give a sense of what it means to operate within the legislation they create/discuss.

1. Schedule key stakeholder meetings as needed for pertinent issues.
2. Promote legislative actions on Ag. and Conservation issues, consistently with the District's charter & past practice.



GOAL 2: Advocate for additional support for the Agriculture Program and use the agencies as resources for regulation interpretation, financial support, etc.



WHEN: Begin July 2021 and continue through July 2025.



TACTICS:

1. Approach state agencies about future subcontracting (for certain project areas) in exchange for additional administrative/review/oversight/QA services to avoid adding new staff positions which may lose funding in the future and for whom the District does not have sufficient administrative capacity.
2. Plan annual legislative outreach events to discuss current and proposed legislation and how it impacts Lancaster County's agriculture on a macro scale. Focus on Lancaster County legislators, with special attention to elected officials who sit on conservation and/or environmental committees.
3. Continue ongoing communications and be proactive about issues that may impact the District and its clients.

Strategic Initiative 5 (Agriculture)

Enhance relationships with industry partners and organizations.

Partner organizations look to the District to provide technical, educational, and regulatory support for ag projects, and the District benefits from partnerships with like-minded organizations. Partnerships increase conservation management, practices, and education available in the county. Collaboration also brings opportunities to introduce the benefits of the Conservation District to new audiences. These partnerships are crucial to District activities and conservation efforts within the County. At times, the District and partners compete or fail to coordinate, resulting in redundancy at best and counterproductivity at worst.



KEY INDIVIDUALS:

- ↔ Information Technology
- ↔ Agriculture Department Manager
- ↔ District Manager
- ↔ Finance/Business Manager
- ↔ Board of Directors



GOAL 1: Enhance boundaries, commitments, and relationships with our local industry partners.



WHEN: Begin by December 2020 and continue through 2025.



TACTICS:

1. Expand and advertise a list of services and fee schedules for specific services applicable to partners (non-profits, townships, consultants, etc.) by December of 2022.
2. When sponsoring grants or partnering on grant projects, funds must be identified to offset administrative and operation expenses. Projects lacking in administrative dollars require special approval by the board.
3. Co-sponsor events with competitive partners (without endorsement of those partners) by December 2021.
4. Work cohesively with local partners (while ensuring autonomous functionality).
 - ↔ Avoid and reduce overlap where applicable with local partnering agencies.
 - ↔ Work with Ag. Preserve and Farmland Trust to avoid inspection in the same year. Develop a mutual understanding of acceptable Conservation or Ag. E&S plans so they can be used for either agency's inspections.
5. Generate a flow chart or other tool that partners (and clients) can use to identify specific resources they need regarding staffing, resources, or opportunities. Publish on the website and distribute to partners.
 - ↔ Include: new hire information, program staff, funding opportunities, service regions, technician-specific services, etc.



Erosion & Sedimentation Program

The Erosion & Sedimentation (E&S) Program helps ensure that clients throughout the county follow regulations regarding new construction (Chapter 102) and water obstructions and encroachments (Chapter 105) through delegation agreements with PA DEP. The department works with consultants, landowners, operators, contractors, excavators, and municipalities to implement BMPs relating to erosion and sedimentation control and some stormwater management. The District provides reviews of projects seeking permit coverage as well as inspection of currently permitted projects to ensure clients follow the permit requirements. The District also provides responses to complaints received from the general public concerning earth disturbance activity, water obstructions, and encroachments throughout the county. This programmatic strategic plan focuses on improving district operations within the confines of the tightly regulated delegation agreements to better serve the public. In doing so, it addresses the critical resources of soil loss, education and outreach, funding, and district operations.

Strategic Initiative 1 (E&S Program):

Improve awareness and adherence of PA Code Title 25 Chapter 102 and Chapter 105 regulations Among the Regulated Community.

The regulations contained in PA Code Title 25 Chapter 102 provides the basis for the state's E&S Control Program which specifically addresses earth disturbance activities relating to construction, timber harvesting and oil & gas activities within the state. The Lancaster Conservation District administers the Chapter 102 program for regulated activities within Lancaster County, including administering the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for stormwater discharges associated with construction activities. This specific NPDES permit addresses the use of erosion and sedimentation (E&S) control and post-construction stormwater management (PCSM) BMPs. The District also administers permitting pertaining to water obstructions and encroachments as outlined in PA Code Title 25 Chapter 105. Common permitted structures utilizing general permits (GPs) under Chapter 105 include agricultural crossings and ramps, utility line crossings and minor road crossings. By improving awareness of these regulations, the District hopes to increase BMP implementation and reduce incidents of noncompliance among the regulated community. This initiative also allows the department some flexibility in seeking out partnerships with other organizations that have similar goals and objectives. This collaborative networking allows the department to expand its reach and available resources. Through these activities, the strategic initiative addresses water quality, soil erosion, and collaborative partnerships.



KEY INDIVIDUALS: ↻ Erosion & Sedimentation Department Staff ↻ E&S Committee (BOD)
 ↻ Other District Staff (able to cover topics in meetings outside of Chapter 102 and Chapter 105)



GOAL 1: Capitalize on partnerships with municipalities and agencies and the role they play in regulating environmental activities to serve as a trustworthy resource to the regulated community.



WHEN: Complete by 2021, continue annually.



TACTICS:

1. Intentionally engage municipalities.
 - ↻ Review & revise the LCCD/Municipality MOU bi-annually.
 - ↻ Host educational meetings for municipalities grouped by their geographic locations to decrease the number of needed meetings and to increase collaboration between neighboring municipalities. Begin by December 2020.
 - ↻ Technicians perform 2-4 brief intentional formal or informal outreach (drop-ins, phone calls, etc.) to each of their

municipalities on an annual basis in order to build relationships with municipal staff and review memorandum of understanding (MOU) and regulations with municipalities. Begin by January 2021.

2. Intentionally engage agencies active within the county.

- ↻ Host an annual meeting with PennDOT and the County Planning Commission at the start of each fiscal year to facilitate collaboration and provide opportunity to outline projects proposed for the following year. Begin by December of 2021.

3. Intentionally engage other regulated audiences per delegation agreements annually, complete by December of each year.

- ↻ Host at minimum 2 training opportunities and workshops for plan preparers, timber harvesters, contractors and excavators per delegation agreements. At least one of these events should be a lunch and learn opportunity.
- ↻ Perform 2 media outreach activities. One can be the annual report.
- ↻ Citing the many benefits of early engagement, E&S staff will encourage pre-application meetings to clients.

 **GOAL 2. Establish the E&S Department as a Public Resource.**

 **WHEN: Complete by 2021, continue annually.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Provide educational materials for Chapter 102 and Chapter 105 to increase general awareness of these regulations, their importance, and the services of the Erosion and Sedimentation Department at outreach events.

- ↻ Apply for PACD mini-grants to develop program factsheets by January 2021.
- ↻ Develop 3 factsheets over the next five years for use at District events or public events with District presence.

2. Continue Participating in regional E&S Technicians' Meetings.

3. Re-establish a relationship with the Building Industry Association (BIA) to increase flow of information between the District and regulated Community.

- ↻ Establish informal contact with the BIA by email or phone to inquire about possible avenues for involvement by the Conservation District by July 2021.
- ↻ Evaluate options for the Conservation District to become a formal member of the BIA by December 2021.
- ↻ Solicit BOD approval by January 2022.
- ↻ Identify staff and directors to be the main conduit or representation.

4. Research possible associations within Lancaster County that present opportunities for Erosion & Sedimentation Department involvement, including: landscaping associations, excavating associations, contractor associations, professional engineering associations, land surveyors & geologist associations, regional associations or HOA associations with a focus on organizations that assist in BMP maintenance or other work associated with the Erosion & Sedimentation Department.

- ↻ Establish contact with another organization that can have a meaningful impact in achieving this goal by December 2021.
- ↻ Identify staff and directors to be the main conduit or representation by December 2021.
- ↻ Solicit BOD approval by January 2022.



GOAL 1: Evaluate all delegation agreements currently held by the Erosion & Sedimentation Department based on applicability to department goals and financial feasibility.



WHEN: February 2021 through 2025.



TACTICS:

1. Evaluate the District’s current Level 3 Chapter 102 delegation agreement with PA DEP. If benefits to the District do not outweigh the level of responsibility, consider revising the delegation agreement to Level 2 by February 2021.
2. Evaluate the District’s current Chapter 105 delegation agreement with PA DEP. If benefits to the District do not outweigh the level of responsibility, consider discontinuing this delegation agreement by February 2021.
3. As new delegation agreements are presented to the District, complete evaluations of the proposed responsibilities and potential benefits as needed.
4. Present any proposed revisions to existing delegation agreements or additions of new delegation agreements to the Board of Directors for review and approval.

Strategic Initiative 4 (E&S Program):

Adopt & Implement E-permitting for the 102 & 105 Programs as the e-permitting program evolves.

Programs administered by the department are constantly evolving. Recently, this has meant a transition of the NPDES and Chapter 105 GP permit review process to a digital or “e-permitting” system at the state level. In order to continue to meet the demands of delegation agreements, the department must adapt to these changes. Adequate funding for the equipment needed to utilize e-permitting systems is imperative to guaranteeing the department’s ability to protect the natural resources of the county. This initiative addresses critical resources of funding and district operations.



KEY INDIVIDUALS: ↔ Erosion & Sedimentation Department Manager

- Erosion & Sedimentation Department Staff
- E&S Committee (BOD)



GOAL 1: Reevaluate the need for adding and upgrading hardware and software in order to meet the needs of the Erosion & Sedimentation Department as E-permitting evolves.



WHEN: Complete by the end of 2020 and review annually.



TACTICS:

1. Develop an SOP for tracking, payment and workflow of internal review fees under the new e-permitting system.
2. Evaluate hardware (i.e. tablets) needed to allow staff to access plan drawings during site inspections.
3. Conduct an annual review of current department equipment and ensure that the operational needs of the department are being met. First review by January 2021.

Strategic Initiative 5 (E&S Program):

Maintain an E&S Department Review Fee Structure that Ensures the Long-term Sustainability of the Department.

The Erosion & Sedimentation Department charges clients a fee based on an approved fee schedule to complete reviews of permit applications and construction plans. These fees are integral to funding the operations of the department. In order to maintain adequate funding for the department's activities, this fee schedule must be regularly reviewed and revised. This initiative addresses the critical resource of funding.



KEY INDIVIDUALS:

- ↔ Board of Directors
- ↔ Erosion & Sedimentation Committee
- ↔ Erosion & Sedimentation Department Manager
- ↔ Erosion & Sedimentation Department Staff



GOAL 1: Conduct a biennial review of the Erosion & Sedimentation Department review fee structure.



WHEN: Biennial review in 2021 for implementation at the beginning of 2022.



TACTICS:

1. Appoint an Erosion & Sedimentation Department Staff Member to generate a document comparing the review fee structures of surrounding conservation districts.
2. Evaluate both local economic development and inflation.
3. Account for needs in salary increase comparable to other organizations with similar services.
4. Considering all of the above data, review and revise the review fee schedule and submit it to the Board of Directors for review and approval.
5. Minor amendments to the fee schedule may be proposed by the E&S Department Manager, approved by the E&S Committee, and submitted to the Board of Directors for approval each year as needed if a full, biennial review is not occurring. A full review of the E&S fee schedule can be conducted on an annual basis at the discretion of the Key Individuals.
6. Establish a communication plan to inform the regulated community of fee and/or program changes.

Strategic Initiative 3 (Watershed):

Utilize effective and up-to-date conservation technology, equipment, and techniques as related to the work of the Watershed Department.

This initiative addresses the critical resources of water quality, partnerships, and funding through activity development and technology acquisition. Access to the best and newest technology and equipment allows the department to complete their work improving water quality throughout the county. This initiative also helps ensure that the growing watershed department has the skills and knowledge needed to support the community in improving water quality. Adequate funding is essential to maintaining the resources of the department, and partnerships with outside organizations allows the department access to more resources and share their own resources with others.

-  **KEY INDIVIDUALS:**
- ↔ Watershed Resource Technician
 - ↔ Watershed Assistant
 - ↔ Watershed Specialist
 - ↔ IT
 - ↔ Partnering Organizations

 **GOAL 1: Develop a Program to Provide Riparian Buffer Maintenance Equipment for District and Landowner Use.**

 **WHEN: Ongoing through 2025.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Explore and pursue opportunities to fund new equipment acquisition.
2. Develop a procedure to document equipment usage and liability waiver.
3. Develop guidelines and procedures for proper maintenance of equipment.
4. Evaluate the need for and research options for a vehicle and trailer to effectively transport the equipment.

 **GOAL 2: Continue to Integrate the Use of Electrofishing Techniques into the Work of the Department to Document Changes in Stream Biodiversity.**

 **WHEN: Ongoing through 2025.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Participate in training related to use of electrofishing techniques to collect fish population and biodiversity data.
2. Create a procedure for utilizing collected data to adjust future goals of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Improvement Plan (WIP).

 **GOAL 3: Expand the Watershed Department's use of Mapping Technology to Better Document Changes in Water Quality.**

 **WHEN: Ongoing through 2025.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Partner with other organizations (Lancaster County GIS Department, PA DEP, USFWS etc.) to access applicable mapping software.
2. Participate in training related to utilizing mapping technology as training becomes available and aligns with the tasks of the watershed staff.

 **GOAL 4: Develop a Program to Utilize the District’s drone to further the work of the Watershed Department.**

 **WHEN: Ongoing through 2025.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Develop a program that allows the department to collect data on riparian areas, survey installed riparian buffers and to create educational content relating to riparian buffers.
2. Ensure that all activities meet applicable Federal Aviation Association (FAA) regulations.

 **GOAL 5: Ensure that Watershed Department staff stay informed of the latest training, BMPs and issues related to their respective positions.**

 **WHEN: Ongoing through 2025.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Participate in training and professional development opportunities related to riparian buffer installation and maintenance techniques or other related topics, as available.

Strategic Initiative 4 (Watershed):

Maintain existing funding sources and identify opportunities for new sources of funding.

Adequate funding is essential to the conservation work completed by the department. The department currently utilizes a multitude of funding streams. This initiative allows the department to continue utilizing these resources while seeking out new, additional sources of funding.

 **KEY INDIVIDUALS:**

 Watershed Department	 The Conservation Foundation
 Business Manager	 Financial Manager
 Grants Coordinator	

 **GOAL 1: Increase funding for new and existing staff positions.**

 **WHEN: Begin by December 2020 and continue through 2025.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Hold annual meeting to more formally identify specific needs and goals in order to pursue grants more intentionally.
2. Research and identify at least 1 new grant funding opportunity per year.
3. Continue to apply for current funding sources (such as Growing Greener grants, NFWF & Section 319 grants).

 **GOAL 2: Identify and secure sources of consistent income to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Watershed Department.**

 **WHEN: Ongoing through 2025.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Identify specific needs and goals in order to pursue new grant projects more intentionally.
2. Initiate preliminary research on a Watershed Department Fee Schedule and follow up with a proposal to the Board of Directors, as appropriate.
3. Partner with the Conservation Foundation of Lancaster County and other partners to explore potential sources of long-term funding.

Strategic Initiative 5 (Watershed): **Evaluate the Dirt & Gravel/Low Volume Road Program.**

The Dirt & Gravel/Low Volume Road Program provides state funding for the maintenance of dirt, gravel and low volume roads throughout the state. The Watershed Department provides oversight of the distribution of these funds within the county. Maintenance of these roads decreases non-point source pollution, therefore improving water quality. The intent of this initiative is to directly address this natural resource concern. As criteria for this program continue to tighten, the District will need to evaluate its capacity to administer the program.

 **KEY INDIVIDUALS:**

 Watershed Assistant	 Watershed Specialist
 Dirt & Gravel Road Quality Assurance Board	 Board of Directors
 District Manager	

 **GOAL 1: Evaluate District capacity to administer this program.**

 **WHEN: Complete by June 2021.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Evaluate the program to ensure that the responsibilities of program administration are in alignment with the District's goals, staffing, and funding capacity.
2. If the benefits to the District and its mission do not outweigh the level of responsibility, consider reducing or ending the District's involvement in the administration of the Dirt & Gravel Road Program.

 **GOAL 2: Engage municipalities across the county to increase participation and the number of high-quality applications for funding, if the District continues to administer the program.**

 **WHEN: Ongoing through 2025.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Identify and contact municipalities that do not currently participate in the Dirt & Gravel/Low Volume Road Program.
2. Actively promote project successes.

Strategic Initiative 6 (Watershed):

Provide assistance to municipalities in meeting their Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Program permit requirements.

Municipalities are required to apply for permit coverage under the NPDES program for discharges from their MS4s. The Watershed Department will begin providing some assistance municipalities in meeting permit requirements in order to decrease nonpoint source pollution discharged from these systems. The intent of this strategic initiative is to address water quality as well as begin fostering new partnerships.

-  **KEY INDIVIDUALS:**
- Watershed Resource Technician
 - Watershed Assistant
 - Watershed Specialist
 - E&S staff

 **GOAL 1: Explore and pursue opportunities to partner with municipalities in meeting their permit requirements.**

 **WHEN: Ongoing through 2025.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Partner with municipalities to provide assistance (possible forms of assistance include educational opportunities, project assistance, and plan review).
2. Facilitate opportunities for municipalities to partner with neighboring municipalities to provide educational opportunities and project implementation.
3. Lay the groundwork for more large-scale assistance.

Strategic Initiative 7 (Watershed):

Partner with organizations to achieve common watershed goals.

Numerous organizations and agencies are working to improve water quality in the county. This initiative encourages the Watershed Department to seek out opportunities for collaboration and joint projects.

-  **KEY INDIVIDUALS:**
- Watershed Resource Technician
 - Watershed Assistant
 - Watershed Specialist
 - Partner Organizations
 - Clean Water Partners

 **GOAL 1: Identify shared watershed goals with outside organizations to facilitate collaborative opportunities.**

 **WHEN: Ongoing through 2020 and complete by March 2021.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Identify shared goals and inventory skills to explore shared project opportunities.
2. Collaborate with partners and agencies to gather data watershed improvement work throughout the county.
3. Delegate a party responsible for compiling a list of completed and ongoing projects from each partnering organization to consolidate resources and streamline collaboration.
4. Determine a central point of contact and reporting mechanism for a county-wide list of achievements and report compiled data.

Strategic Initiative 8 (Watershed):

Enhance Communication, Understanding, and Engagement of the Watershed Department's Importance Work Throughout the County.

The intent of this initiative is to effectively use social and mass media presence in order to address the critical resources of improving water quality and educating residents of the county.

 **KEY INDIVIDUALS:**  Watershed Assistant  Watershed Specialist

 **GOAL 1: Utilize existing platforms and explore new platforms to connect the Watershed Department with the general public.**

 **WHEN: Begin 2020 and continue through 2025.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Generate content showcasing events and training sponsored by partnering organizations.
2. Utilize social and mass media outlets to showcase project progress and completion and riparian buffer educational materials.
3. Utilize social media outlets to connect the work of the Watershed Department with the overall work of the District.
4. Review and improve the existing social media presence of the Watershed Department.



Education Program

The Education Program and Department (Program) was reviewed thoroughly as part of our Strategic Planning Initiative. The District used the four main overarching themes for a deeper look at the ways the Program functions, within the office and outwardly with the public. From there, those goals were refined into several program-specific objectives and strategies to accomplish each goal. Overall, the District would like to see the key pillars of the Education Program remain while enhancing the other aspects, such as public outreach, plain-sect outreach and education, communication, and fundraising. By taking the steps outlined below, the District's Education program can continue to empower Lancaster County citizens, inspiring them to conservation action and engaging them in good stewardship. Strategies identified in this section also impact funding as a critical resource, as education efforts are intertwined with funding opportunities. Implementation of these objectives will begin at varying stages between now and 2025.

Strategic Initiative 1 (Education):

Educate and empower critical audiences to take beneficial conservation actions.

 **KEY INDIVIDUALS:** ← Education Coordinator ← Additional District Staff

 **GOAL 1: Increase engagement with the General Public by designing a contemporary communication initiative.**

The District plans to enhance this pre-existing tenet of the current Education Program through a myriad of tactics such as promoting the mission statement to the public via publications, developing branding for the District, and enhancing marketing efforts to better show the public what the District can offer. The District would like to enhance visibility and value for the work that it does through increased public relations and media presence to reach a broader audience. Increasing communication in all its forms is a main theme of this goal.

 **WHEN: December 2020 - December 2025.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Evaluate current promotional and educational materials for District branding. Analyze funding needed for a communications project to involve branding the District logo and mission statement. Update all reports, newsletters, and public communications to include contemporized branding of the District. Seek funding based on analysis to prepare District branding tools and materials which may include promotion stickers, magnets, thumb drives, etc. in addition to education resources and materials. Begin by January 2021 and have ready for use by January 2023.
2. Apprise the general public of District success stories on a regular basis using contemporary communications. Obtain funding to create District success stories videos utilizing District branding for electronic share points on website and social media. Begin by January 2023 and complete by December 2025.
3. To pinpoint how and what the public needs from the District, the District will create a survey-based needs assessment to distribute to partners, collaborators, customers, and the general public to gather input on the District activities and resources. Begin by December 2020 and complete by February 2021.
4. Through evaluation, survey, and analysis, the District Operations Team will review communications projects and public engagement to maintain a balance of District programming and events, ongoing January 2022-2025.



GOAL 2: Coordinate the design and delivery of high quality conservation education programs and materials.

This strategy focuses on enhancing the current youth-focused education opportunities by adding three new water quality lessons, and 2 teacher resource materials enriched by a new streamlined education website for teachers and students. Three new learning strategies focused on technology will enable learning and communications in person and virtually.



WHEN: July 2020 - 2025.



TACTICS:

1. Catalog and evaluate all student learning opportunities, teacher resource materials, and lesson plans currently available. Ensure that all current and newly developed lessons and materials incorporate the best updated science knowledge; are interdisciplinary and unbiased; and correlated to the revised state environment and ecology standards. December 2020 - April 2021
2. Identify and develop multiple webinars and live cast learning opportunities during the school year as requested by teachers or linked to revised education webpage. Revitalize education webpage to reflect an organized list of resources and online learning. Initiate online registration, application completion, and scheduling. December 2020 - January 2022
3. Update the current newsletter to reflect District success stories. Format newsletters for multiple uses within the District communication project. August 2021 - February 2022



GOAL 3: Engage Plain-Sect educators to foster youth and family conservation actions.

Due to the large number of Plain-Sect living in Lancaster County, the District feels that there is a potential to increase educational opportunities for them and engage their youth in their schools. This will have to be deliberate and strategic.



WHEN: July 2020 - 2025.



TACTICS:

1. Seek 1-3 collaborative partners (e.g. Penn State Extension, Stroud Water Research Center, church leadership, etc.) currently working within the plain-sect community to review and evaluate learning gaps associated with conservation education by December 2022.
2. Work alongside partner(s) to develop contacts, relationships, and enhance outreach to the plain-sect educators ongoing. Begin in 2022 and continue through January 2024.
3. Develop programs and materials designed specifically for use with the plain-sect educators and their schools such as educational kits to use with students that may include magnet or sticker-based activities about stream ecology, native trees, farm practices, soil conservation, and stormwater runoff. Begin December 2022 and continue through December 2025.
4. Facilitate teacher trainings for plain-sect educators in collaboration with partners. Trainings should provide educators with conservation background knowledge, enhanced comfort level associated with learning topics, and practical skills to utilize aforementioned educational kits to share with their students. Begin by December 2023 and continue through September 2025.

Strategic Initiative 2 (Education):

Establish a Sustainable Funding Plan for District Education Activities.

This initiative addresses activity funding as a critical issue of the District Education program to continue and increase outreach.



KEY INDIVIDUALS:

- ↔ Education Coordinator
- ↔ Grant Coordinator
- ↔ Summer Intern
- ↔ Program Managers
- ↔ Additional District Staff
- ↔ Financial Manager
- ↔ Conservation Foundation of Lancaster County



GOAL 1: Invite increased involvement from the general public to donate to the Conservation District activities with a more streamlined, easier to follow, one-time annual funding appeal.



WHEN: April 2021 - December 2025.



TACTICS:

1. Evaluate the development of an annual appeal in coordination with the Conservation Foundation of Lancaster County by August 2021
 - ↔ Condense and structure funding opportunities into a one-time, tiered appeal to ease promotion. Appeal to include options for the donor to select from a tiered donation amount list. Each tier should include sustaining various activity options that can be designated by January 2022.
2. Recognize donors based on tiered amounts in the Annual Report, at the Annual Banquet, website and additional appropriate locations, ongoing January 2022 - December 2025.
3. Develop a “Legacy Gift” option for individuals, families, or estates to donate to the District in memory of an individual by July 2024.



GOAL 2: Enhance the funding presence and offer additional donation opportunities to generate increased funding for the District Education program with improvements such as new materials, technology, etc.



WHEN: Begin April 2021 and continue through 2025.



TACTICS:

1. Increase publicity and visibility for the Extraordinary Give campaign via social media, local print media. Design videos, share testimonials and program evaluations with donors to illustrate funding use by October 2021.
2. Seek out a partner match and promotion partner to enhance the impact of Extraordinary Give donations by November 2021.
3. Evaluate and expand the existing Education program fee schedule for additional services, as appropriate. Complete by June 2021 and evaluate annually.
4. Create a team sponsorship option for donors to Envirothons; raising visibility to acknowledge sponsors within local school districts as well as at the events. Begin by January 2022, and achieve by December 2025.
5. Add a “round-up” option to District Tree Sale orders by February 2021.



GOAL 3: Pursue grant funding to support Plain-Sect Teacher Training initiative to allow for purchase of materials, staff time, etc.



WHEN: January 2021 - December 2025.



TACTICS:

1. Research grant availability, begin by January 2021, and complete by December 2021.
2. Develop networking and communications necessary to procure funding begin by January 2021, and complete by December 2021.
3. Apply and seek funds based on evaluation of needs and training components to successfully train Plain-Sect educators regarding soil and water conservation lessons begin by January 2021, and complete by December 2022.

Strategic Initiative 3 (Education):

Advance synergistic relationships with new and current partners to solidify the network of contacts, broaden the web of potential interactions, and connect with critical audiences.

This strategic initiative looks primarily at relationships the District has with various audiences and is broken down by targeted audience groups instead of targeted actions. By considering the different audience groups individually, the District can better serve their needs.



KEY INDIVIDUALS:

- ↔ Education Coordinator
- ↔ Plain-Sect Outreach Staff
- ↔ Ag. Staff



GOAL 1: Connect with youth and educators.



WHEN: Begin July 2020 and continue through 2025.



TACTICS:

1. Develop criteria for selecting appropriate partnerships that can assist in the achievement of the Education program strategic plan (programs, materials, and funding) starting in January 2021. Complete by January 2022.
2. Review program budgets and pursue/identify funds that are available for the development of new partnerships
 - ↔ Ensure that funds are identified for the development of new partnerships and enhancement of existing ones in support of Envirothons, Youth Conservation School, school visits, etc. presented by the District that they remain strong while enhancing their value brought to Lancaster County’s youth. Being by January 2022, and complete by December 2025.
3. Explore opportunities to transition or expand existing in-person programs to include online/virtual learning. Utilize county and state agency partnerships to initiate these opportunities; including but not limited to Lancaster County Parks and Recreation, and PA Game Commission. Being by January 2021, and continue through December 2025.
4. Facilitate an evaluation of the partnership with Federated Sportsmen of Lancaster County for long-term sustainability of Youth Conservation School including host site, registration fees, sponsorships, and operational costs. Being by March 2021, and complete by March 2022.

★ GOAL 2: Connect with the general public.

🕒 WHEN: Begin July 2020 and continue through 2025.

✓ TACTICS:

1. Collaborate with the Library System of Lancaster County to host up to 17 educational programs as part of the strategic plan District contemporary communications project highlighting conservation topics; prepare pamphlets, magnets, and other materials for the general public. Begin by January 2023, and complete by December 2025.
2. Incorporate the District Education Coordinator as a partner with District staff when generating or developing education opportunities. Utilize the District Education Coordinator as a reference for communications and instruction in developing training materials or resources. Begin by January 2021, and continue through December 2025.
3. Annually District staff will pursue one new audience/venue for outreach activities to broaden the District's scope. Begin by January 2022, and continue through December 2025.

★ GOAL 3: Reinvigorate connection with the Plain Sect community.

🕒 WHEN: Begin July 2020 and continue through 2025.

✓ TACTICS:

1. The District Education Coordinator will identify at least one opportunity for collaboration annually with the District's Plain-Sect Outreach department in line with the evaluation/restructuring of the Plain Sect Outreach department referenced in Goal 2, Strategic Initiative 3 (Agriculture). Begin by January 2022 and complete by December 2025.
2. Incorporate collaborations for new plain-sect outreach opportunities such as Stroud Water Research, Plain Sect Bishops, fire companies, mud sales, including coordinating transportation to these education events.
3. Perform intentional outreach to plain sect teachers. See strategic Goal 3 under Strategic Initiative 1 (Education).



Conservation Foundation Of Lancaster County

The Conservation Foundation of Lancaster County was reviewed as part of the District’s Strategic Planning Initiative, though it is not specifically a District Program. The Foundation and the District share board members and staff, and the Foundation acts as the nonprofit funding arm for the Conservation District as well as for other Lancaster County conservation initiatives. In the review of the Foundation, the work group focused on the Foundation’s need to: build and maintain capacity for sustainable increases in activities, enhance communications and relationships with partners, and increase financial support for its activities and the organizations it serves. The critical resource issues that the Conservation Foundation addresses are funding and partnership, though their efforts indirectly impact all of the other critical resource issues, as well.

Strategic Initiative 1 (Foundation):

Address Issues that the Conservation Foundation Faces Proactively.

The intent of this initiative is to make the nonprofit arm of the Conservation District resilient to external pressures and ready to respond to new opportunities. The Conservation Foundation sponsors grants for both the District and other like-minded organizations furthering conservation work in the county. Work groups recognize that the support the Foundation has offered the District has been somewhat lacking in recent years and may be experiencing some level of “mission creep.” At the moment, the Foundation is understaffed and needs a focused trajectory.



KEY INDIVIDUALS:

- Foundation Board Chair & Directors
- Education Coordinator
- Project Committees
- District Manager
- Grants Coordinator
- District Program Managers
- Communication Coordinator



GOAL 1: Enhance administrative functionality to meet the growing needs of the District & county.



WHEN: Complete by 2022.



TACTICS:

1. Increase staff to 1-2 people (e.g. Grants Facilitator and/or Communications Coordinator) to foster Board participation and manage outreach presence and internal communication with BOD.
2. Assign social media and outreach tasks to the Communications Coordinator.



GOAL 2: Increase Support for District Activities.



WHEN: Begin by December 2020 and follow up annually.



TACTICS:

1. Create MOU to outline expectations and professional obligations and annually revisit roles/responsibilities between the District and the Foundation.

2. Identify and prioritize specific District needs by soliciting LCCD priorities/needs in writing from both staff and LCCD Board.

Examples:

- ↔ Software support & technology
- ↔ Educational programs like Youth Conservation School (YCS), Envirothon, etc.
- ↔ Existing & New Projects (ag./watershed/buffers, etc.)
- ↔ Funding gaps for Administration and staff, other funding needs (e.g. Extraordinary Give, Annual Appeal, etc.)

3. Establish a Richard M. Shellenberger scholarship for YCS.

- ↔ Designate as action items the exploration of long-term funding opportunities and scholarship process decisions (e.g. fundraiser dinner, advertise & promote funding and identifying applicants and approving applications).



GOAL 3: Be selective in pursuing grants by reviewing all grant submissions to ensure they fit with the mission/vision of the Foundation and complement WIP goals and District efforts.



WHEN: Complete by 2021, review every 2-3 years.



TACTICS:

1. Review and update (if necessary) the foundation's mission & vision.
2. Generate and/or review existing grant selection criteria and establish foundation guidelines to prioritize/select projects which complement WIP goals and District efforts.
3. Ensure that language on the application materials reflects the above limitation.



GOAL 4: Continue to coordinate with other funding programs/efforts in the county to increase awareness of successful projects and availability of funds among funders, partners, stakeholders, and the public.



WHEN: Begin by December 2020 and complete by July 2021.



TACTICS:

1. Explore opportunities to advertise non-profit services to the public and select at least one advertising opportunity/mode annually.
2. Identify and select at least 1 social media platform to use.
3. Generate a one-page summary report (current & future projects) and/or factsheet for the Foundation on social media, district newsletter, annual report, and Foundation website.
4. Create signage for events and projects specific to the foundation.

Strategic Initiative 2 (Foundation):

Foster Increased Leadership & Dedication of the Foundation Board.

Foundation board members are the decision makers who advance the mission of this non-profit. This initiative is meant to provide structural remedies concerning board procedures, meeting logistics, composition of committees, and board member involvement. Board members with diverse backgrounds, skills, and contacts will enable a community of non-profit trustees to serve and lead, strengthening the work of the Conservation District and partners.

-  **KEY INDIVIDUALS:**
- ↔ Foundation Board Chair & Directors
 - ↔ Project Committees
 - ↔ District Manager

 **GOAL 1: Investigate the driving motivations and/or obstacles for board involvement in full time leadership.**

 **WHEN: Complete by December 2021.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Investigate the driving motivations and/or obstacles for board involvement in full time leadership.
 - ↔ Generate a survey that explores these motivations and obstacles of Foundation Board Members.
 - ↔ Select a timeframe for survey distribution (e.g. BOD retreat, farmer meetings, trips, etc.).
 - ↔ Make meetings more accessible by evaluating meeting times & locations.

 **GOAL 2: Recruit a diverse audience of “Movers & Shakers” from different sectors of community to increase board capacity.**

 **WHEN: Begin by December 2020 and complete by December 2022.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Establish a minimum quota of full-time board members and number of representatives from each sector.
2. Recruit board from financial & legal sectors specifically and select 3 currently unrepresented sectors of the community.
3. Set a timeline for recruiting activities.

Strategic Initiative 3 (Foundation):

Continue to grow the Foundation Board by advancing the skills & leadership of the BOD.

This initiative seeks to address skills board members utilize in establishing an efficient board. Those who serve within this initiative will strengthen essential analytical skills and innovative skills to focus a strategic lens on short- and long-term planning. Recognizing that nonprofit leaders may wear many different hats in work and service, each strategy is meant to weave parts of the organization together by considering structural and management practices knitting leadership into the organization’s tapestry.

-  **KEY INDIVIDUALS:**
- ↔ Foundation Board Chair & Directors
 - ↔ Project Committees
 - ↔ District Manager
 - ↔ Communication Coordinator

 **TACTICS:**

1. Co-join the Conservation Foundation's website with LCCWC.
2. Utilize signage, letterhead, and other recognizable materials differentiating between the Foundation and its partners/subcommittees.

 **GOAL 3: Keep website & news articles current.**

 **WHEN: Begin by December 2021 and complete by December 2025.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Move Foundation documents/archives to the website or other system of management (e.g. formal books, records, SOPs, misc. files, Lineage Tree, annual summary reports, etc.).
2. Choose specific topics to write about for articles and select a timeline for regular updates.

 **GOAL 4: Evaluate space for Foundation Board and staff.**

 **WHEN: Begin 2024 and continue through December 2025.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Evaluate existing resources before looking for a more permanent space/venue.
2. Consider Teleworking and virtual meetings.

Strategic Initiative 5 (Foundation): **Identify underutilized funding opportunities.**

Board function and efficiency will develop in this initiative. Foundation board members are community trustees who must build relationships with funders, grantees, local governments, and community leaders to enable funding opportunities to reach the needs of the diverse conservation audiences in the county. By expanding to new horizons, the Foundation tackles the critical resource of funding.

 **KEY INDIVIDUALS:**  Foundation Board of Directors

 **GOAL 1: Seeking new opportunities in the private, public, and/or local sectors.**

 **WHEN: Complete by December 2020.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Identify 3 new public funding opportunities.
2. Identify 3 new private sector opportunities.

Strategic Initiative 6 (Foundation):

Generate a steady funding stream for overhead and administration.

While funds directed to implementation of BMPs are important, projects cannot get off the ground without administrative oversight. Currently, overhead and administration are shared tasks between District staff and the Foundation Board of Directors (BOD), which stretches both staff and the BOD thin. To better serve the District and the county, the Foundation needs to obtain steady funding to cover overhead costs.

-  **KEY INDIVIDUALS:**
- ↔ Foundation Board Chair & Directors
 - ↔ District Manager
 - ↔ Grants Coordinator

 **GOAL 1: Hire a full time grant writer/manager to apply for funds to support District activities and Foundation overhead.**

 **WHEN: Complete by end of 2022.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Develop job description and decide if the position should be both a grant coordinator and outreach/communication coordinator, or if separate positions are needed.
2. Identify initial position funding and hire staff.

 **GOAL 2: Maintain appropriate and supportive fees.**

 **WHEN: Begin by end of 2021, full transition complete by 2024.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Perform a cost-analysis to determine fee structure.
2. Write into every grant a percentage to be allocated to administration.
3. Transition management of the non-profit sponsored grants from the District to the Foundation for the term of the grant once grants coordinator is hired.
 - ↔ Hiring foundation staff & designate subcommittee of the foundation board to oversee nonprofit grants.
 - ↔ The new grants coordinator should manage all non-profit sponsored grants in place of the District by 2024.

 **GOAL 3: Recoup costs from administration of external grants by limiting the number of external projects taken on.**

 **WHEN: Complete by December 2021.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Choose a reasonable threshold to cap external projects. This threshold should be lower than the threshold set for District-sponsored or District-related projects.
2. Establish foundation guidelines to prioritize/select projects to fund and ensure that language on the application materials reflects the limitation.

Strategic Initiative 7 (Foundation):

Define Foundation Roles & Responsibilities within the Partnership of LCCWC & CWP.

The Conservation Foundation, the Lancaster County Clean Water Consortium, and the Clean Water Partners perform similar but distinct functions and often partner to achieve goals. To better serve the county and the District, the Foundation will focus on improved communication and sharing of resources between the three partners.



KEY INDIVIDUALS:

- ↔ Foundation Board Chair & Directors
- ↔ Lancaster County Clean Water Consortium Committee
- ↔ Clean Water Partners Coordinator
- ↔ Communications Coordinator



GOAL 1: Increase efficiency & partnerships between the three partners.



WHEN: Complete by December 2020, implement agreements as applicable by July 2021, revise as needed through 2025.



TACTICS:

1. Inventory combined resources and staff to develop formal partner agreements outlining roles and responsibilities.



GOAL 2: Improve communication of Foundation needs and partnership opportunities to LCCWC & CWP.



WHEN: Complete by December 2020, implement agreements and post materials by end of 1st quarter 2021, revise and continue as needed through 2025.



TACTICS:

1. Create a communication protocol between entities by:
 - ↔ Set regular check-in deadlines.
 - ↔ Establish preferred means of communication.
 - ↔ Encourage continued cross-participation.
2. Increase social media presence & formal advertisement on LCCWC, CWP, and LCCD social media platforms.
 - ↔ Generate Foundation content & work with partners to select opportunities to share/post foundation content on social media platforms.
 - ↔ Identify a posting/sharing schedule.

Strategic Initiative 8 (Foundation):

Improve Coordination with Partners who co-sponsor grants with the Foundation.

In order for the Foundation to thrive, it both needs to support and be supported by co-sponsoring grant co-sponsoring partners. These partners must understand and value the Foundation's mission and strategic focus. The strategies within this initiative identify steps to bridged communications and the benefits to both co-grant partners and the Foundation.



KEY INDIVIDUALS: ↔ Foundation Board Chair & Directors ↔ Lancaster County Clean Water Consortium Committee
↔ Clean Water Partners Coordinator ↔ Communications Coordinator
↔ District Manager



GOAL 1: Actively partner and participate in events that will both promote the Foundation as a co-sponsor and promote the organizations the foundation supports.



WHEN: Ongoing through 2025.



TACTICS:

1. Identify two or more specific opportunities to collaborate with partners to bring new funds or new opportunities to the Foundation by December 2020.
2. Coordinate with partners to explore expanded opportunities (e.g. extraordinary give, water week, etc.) now through December 2025.



GOAL 2: Build Relationships with Potential Funders by hosting or co-hosting meetings/ activities/mixers, etc. with CWP & LCCWC.



WHEN: Complete first steps by 2021 and continue through 2025.



TACTICS:

1. Choose 2-3 events for the Foundation BOD to attend as participants to build relationships with potential funders. (e.g. The Funder's Network, Annapolis, Water Week Sponsorship event). Attend the first event by 2nd quarter of 2021.
2. Plan 1 event to co-host with LCCWC or CWP to engage new funders. Complete by December 2021.



GOAL 3: Foundation Board Engages Potential Funders in formal & informal settings.



WHEN: Begin by December 2020 and continue through 2025.



TACTICS:

1. When attending events or meeting with new potential funders outside of official foundation activities, use real-world examples in discussions to make connections between the work we support and the lives they lead.
2. Build a time into every Foundation meeting to report back interactions with potential funders and discuss follow-up activities into every Foundation meeting by December 2020.

Phase II – District Operations Strategic Initiatives

Strategic Initiative 1:

Improve staff retention.

When asked to identify three of the top challenges faced by the District, one of the overarching themes was the problem of low staff retention, and the District’s inability to address it. Such turnover is demoralizing, and staff cite some of the consequences they’ve experienced as a result of this turnover. Some refer to reduced work capacity or increased strain as trained employees leave and remaining staff must cover their tasks and train replacements. Others feel that the District has lost “good, trained employees,” or “good, forward-thinking employees...because we were unable to harness their new ideas which are flourishing at other agencies,” who could have contributed to the District’s financial or technical success.

This problem is multifaceted, and as the workgroups and exit-interviews have identified, there is no single-reason that employees leave the District. “The grass looks greener...” writes one respondent. Others note that the District is reactionary, not proactive and missing out on innovative opportunities, others feel that professional development or advancement opportunities are not readily available. Salary was also listed by the majority of the staff, not only in reference to those who have left the District, but in reference to current working conditions.



KEY INDIVIDUALS:

- ↔ District Manager & Operations Team
- ↔ Employee Relations Committee
- ↔ Board of Directors – Personnel Committee
- ↔ Program Managers
- ↔ Business/Finance Manager



GOAL 1: Improve salary to retain staff.

Nearly every respondent cited low salary as either one of the top challenges faced by the District or as one of the top things they would change about how the District operates. One respondent put it well, “Staff retention & compensation [is the greatest challenge]. We pride ourselves on being a first-class conservation organization, but staff don’t seem to believe we offer a first class [sic] compensation and benefits package, and thus many leave the District because of it.” Other very telling statements came out of the question, “What would you change?” Wrote one respondent, “I would increase everyone’s pay to reflect the real-world cost of living - no one can work here unless they have a significant other that is footing most of the bills at home.” Another echoed this sentiment: “Staff salaries are below a living wage. Most of us can only survive because of a spouse [sic] support. The year-end printout that shows our salary plus our benefits, attempts to show our benefits as part of our salary. The [sic] additional items on there are the cost of doing business.”

Another says, “Staff could use an increase in yearly salary to help with retention and workplace morale. For example, the district requires a college education which means the newer employees come in with a lot of debt, sometimes equal to [or greater than] the yearly starting salary. This debt can be crept out of slowly but it is still a daunting task and will take a long time to pay back. The employees who have been here a long time and remain faithful to the district should be compensated for their loyalty and hard work. They go about their work knowing they could have a higher salary working for a private business, but they enjoy the satisfaction of helping out the public and being good stewards.” Finding a solution to this problem is important not only for the sake of the staff who need to put food on the table and pay their bills, but also as one respondent notes, “. . . We want the best and brightest (from a variety of backgrounds) to be protecting our natural resources.”



WHEN: Ongoing through 2025.



TACTICS:

1. Better leverage the relationship with the Conservation Foundation of Lancaster County.
 - ↔ To better communicate with the Foundation, the District will be present at their quarterly meetings to discuss program needs, beginning January 2021.

- ↪ See the Conservation Foundation Programmatic Strategic Plan (Phase I).
 - ↪ Establish District wide Annual Appeal to seek funds for specific programs (e.g. Education) & District-wide needs by January 2022.
2. Review Program Fees to preserve the technical knowledge from which the private sector benefits on a biennial basis, beginning 2020.
 - ↪ Continue to evaluate & increase E&S fees as appropriate
 - ↪ Re-evaluate the other programs for new fee opportunities.
 - ↪ Increase salaries above cost of living, as fees allow.
 3. Continue to petition the state agencies for an increase in operational support to cover staff salaries and benefits at 10-12%, instead of the current 5-7%..
 4. Explore funding opportunities from the upcoming PACD state-wide list, as applicable by January 2022.
 5. Improve Grants Management by December 2021
 - ↪ Develop a transparent process to ensure that all grants accepted or sponsored include administrative funding that covers the true cost of administration. Approval for grants lacking administrative costs must be given by the District and/or Foundation Board of Directors as applicable.
 - ↪ Perform payroll calculations to determine average costs of grant administration.
 - ↪ Generate more specified grant-selection criteria to evaluate and select grants that align with the needs of the District by April 2021.
 - ↪ Develop a Grants Coordinator position (either for existing staff or as a separate position) by January 2021.
 - ↪ Identify, purchase/design, and implement Grants Management software.
 - ↪ Select and join 1 to 2 grant funder databases to join for identifying new grant support.
 6. Annual salary and benefit reviews will take into account the current salaries and benefits offered by surrounding conservation districts beginning January 2022.



GOAL 2: Review & Revise Benefits to maintain status of competitive employer & retain staff.

Most staff noted that benefits were good, but a few survey respondents raise topics that they felt could be re-evaluated. These include: Paid Family Leave, Flexible PTO Options, Increased Flexibility in Daily/Weekly Work Schedule, Student Loan Debt Benefit, and High-Quality Health Insurance that has a wider network.



WHEN: 2021-2025.



TACTICS:

1. Partner with other districts or advocate that PACD address health benefit limitations by January 2025.
 - ↪ Explore insurance companies (e.g. UPMC, etc.) that serve multiple regions in the state and self-insurance options by January 2022.
 - ↪ Explore municipal self-insurance.
2. Develop/Improve a Paid Family Leave benefit by January 2022.
3. Develop and implement a Telework option by January 2021.
 - ↪ Survey staff who requested modifications to existing flexible schedules to see if those modifications can be addressed through this benefit.
4. Review the newly implemented Student Loan Debt benefit by July 2023.

Strategic Initiative 2:

Continue to Develop Training Activities & Professional Development Opportunities.

Staff and the workgroups identified the need for additional training opportunities or professional development in terms of career advancement. It is worth noting that though training and professional development are interrelated, training (basic or advanced skills to do the job) is distinct from professional advancement (more responsibility and/or job authority with corresponding reimbursement, well-rounded employee with skills outside of the respective program areas). The purpose of this initiative is to provide staff with the skills to act as a technical and educational resource to their clients and the community at large while developing their professional repertoire.



KEY INDIVIDUALS: ↔ District Manager & Program Managers ↔ District Education Coordinator
 ↔ Human Resource Specialist



GOAL 1: Ensure staff receive the necessary training to succeed in their tasks.



WHEN: 2021-2023



TACTICS:

1. Evaluate the training/on-boarding process for faster skill development and cross-training within departments to develop broader skill sets.
 - ↔ Review & revise training SOP to develop a training team to implement tiered trainings by September 2021.
 - ↔ Revisit the mentor system by September 2021.
 - ↔ Discuss and approve/reject mandatory cross-training events on a regular basis (schedule to be determined) by September 2021.
 - ↔ Having some level of training managed by HR by January 2023.
 - ↔ Tracking system for employee completion of trainings by January 2023.
 - ↔ Review SOPs and incorporate them into trainings by January 2023.



GOAL 2: Allow for continued opportunities for professional development & pathways for advancement (vertical growth/movement).



WHEN: Complete by 2025.



TACTICS:

1. Identify sustainable funding to accompany advancements/recognition for all programs by 2025.



GOAL 3: Build an education component into the activities of all programs consistent with the District's Mission.



WHEN: Complete by 2021.



TACTICS:

1. In collaboration between departments, train staff on “how to be a good educator/trainer” when doing field work and how to be “good presenters” when engaging in formal education or outreach events. First training in summer 2021.

2. In collaboration with program managers, formally build time commitments into each staff member’s annual goals or job description by December 2021.
 - ↪ Develop thresholds for staff to commit time to educational activities both within and outside of their program areas based on funding availability, the Education Program’s needs, and delegated education/outreach efforts.
 - ↪ Secure additional support (funds or staffing) for the Education Program to make up the difference where the program’s specific activities exceed allowable (e.g. funded) participation of non-education department staff.
 - ↪ Standardize timesheets to measure educational activities.

Strategic Initiative 3:

Increase Board of Directors (BOD) Engagement & Foster Relationships between Staff & BOD.

Nearly half of the staff respondents indicated a desire for a closer relationship between the staff and District’s board of directors caused by a perceived disconnect between board and staff, making it difficult for the BOD to be responsive to the needs (programmatic & employment-related) of the District’s staff. The exact source of this disconnect is unclear. Some respondents feel strongly that certain demographics (younger, minority, female, diverse business interests, etc.) are underrepresented in the BOD. The relatively homogeneous composition makes it difficult for board members to relate to staff in different walks of life, and it minimizes opportunities for new perspectives and innovative business practices/opportunities that could benefit the District’s mission and its staff. It may also stem in part from the current meeting structure, minimal opportunities for interaction with staff and programs, and the engagement of board members.



KEY INDIVIDUALS:

- ↪ District Manager & Operations Team
- ↪ Employee Relations Committee
- ↪ Board of Directors



GOAL 1: Foster relationships between the BOD & staff.



WHEN: 2020-2024.



TACTICS:

1. Formally and informally introduce new staff to the board within the first three months of employment before and during the board meeting beginning July 2020.
 - ↪ Include in performance expectations, job descriptions, probationary evaluation.
2. Schedule occasional staff meetings or teambuilding events with board members or at board member operations (where applicable). First event by September 2021.
3. Develop for internal use, a database of Directors & Associate Directors including:
 - ↪ Picture & Biographies (relevant personal information/interests, board activities, service history, recognitions, etc.),
 - ↪ Date of installment & service terms,
 - ↪ Contact information.
4. Develop a BOD & staff mentorship program by July 2023.
5. Develop at least one new way to communicate board roles & activities to staff by July 2022.
6. Develop cross-training events for staff and directors by providing opportunities for staff to observe (or participate when appropriate) in meetings or activities outside the annual board meeting by July 2023.

GOAL 2: Increase BOD knowledge of District functions and activities.

 WHEN: 2021-2023.

TACTICS:

1. Hold semi-annual “Lunch & Learns” that allow staff and board members to interact. First L&L by September 2021.
2. Provide quarterly updates on specific projects in each department by January 2021.
3. Continue to engage board members to serve on at least one District committee by January 2022.
4. Develop cross-training events for staff and directors by providing opportunities for board members to observe (or participate when appropriate) in meetings or activities by July 2023.

GOAL 3: Expand BOD Capacity & Diversity.

 WHEN: 2021-2022.

TACTICS:

1. Using 80% attendance as the target, evaluate Directors’ preferences and availability for meetings to maximize participation.
 - ↪ Evaluate & adjust times, dates, accessibility of meetings to accommodate more BOD & advisor presence & participation at meetings within state guidelines by July 2021.
 - ↪ With some guidance from the State, utilize some level of online access, even past covid-19 restrictions.
2. Actively connect with nominating organizations to continue to recruit diverse board members as current directors’ terms expire. Begin by June 2021.
3. Create tracking tool for board term-limits & assign this task to a staff member by December 2021.
4. Annually establish and update the nomination committee by September of each year.

Strategic Initiative 4:

Increase Staff Efficiency through additional administrative support and improved communication.

Many of the staff felt that they are not receiving sufficient administrative support. While the District Manager and administrative staff work to meet the needs of the office, they are over-extended, negatively impacting the technical staff’s ability to work efficiently. Many survey respondents and the work groups have identified a need for a Human Resources (HR) coordinator. Not having an employee devoted to HR issues siphons time from the core activities of the District Manager, existing administrative staff, and technical staff, whereas a HR coordinator could manage: benefits enrollment, health program, recruitment/termination, culture/team building, training logistics and progress, etc. An HR coordinator would lessen the extra administrative duties and meetings that are required for each District employee. Additionally, without an HR person, there is no “point-person” for in-office issues to be resolved satisfactorily. An HR coordinator would also act as a resource who stays up-to-date on regulations that govern HR policies. Staff have also recognized the need for better communication and more consideration of their time to create more efficiencies.

 **KEY INDIVIDUALS:** ↪ District Manager, Program Managers/Operations Team

↪ Employee Relations Committee & HR Coordinator

↪ Administrative Staff & Business/Finance Managers

↪ Board of Directors

↪ Personnel Committee

↪ Personnel Committee

 **GOAL 1: Re-prioritize tasks and staff for added capacity for administrative work.**

 **WHEN: 2021.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Hire a Human Resource Coordinator (in house or retained) to manage HR & intra-office administrative activities by March 2021.
2. Further explore the possibility of hiring an assistant to the District Manager for administrative tasks and make a decision by July 2021.

 **GOAL 2: Provide support to existing administrative staff.**

 **WHEN: 2020-2021.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Re-evaluate work loads, assignments, and staff needs to update job descriptions to reflect changes by December 2020.
2. Remove the title of “secretary” in speech & written documents by December 2020.
3. Ensure that the administrative staff have the opportunity to sit on committees and be involved in decision-making by August 2020.
4. Provide a communication flowchart to guide admin. staff in directing difficult calls to the appropriate contact by March 2021.

 **GOAL 3: Reinvigorate staff meetings.**

 **WHEN: Implement by November 2020.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Shorten average time spent in staff meetings to 45-60 minutes.
2. Focus on current affairs, events, deadlines, and policies that impact all or most of the staff. This can include inter-department project updates, wellness & safety messaging, board meeting review, district operations, etc.
3. Offer general program updates only on a quarterly basis.
 - ↳ Put program updates in the weekly in-the-loop (as an alternative).
4. Review annually & modify staff meeting procedures as needed to accommodate the communication needs of the administration and staff.

 **GOAL 4: Evaluate & refine existing committees, committee leadership, and expectations for committee participation in light of the administrative shifts described above.**

 **WHEN: Implement by March 2021.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Evaluate & refine existing committees, committee leadership, and expectations for committee participation in light of the administrative shifts described above by March 2021.

GOAL 5: Improve Internal Communications.

 **WHEN: Implement from 2020-2021.**

TACTICS:

1. Provide timely formal acknowledgement when staff leave or jobs are posted by July 2020.
 - ↪ Inform staff of new job listings before the job is posted on the website.
 - ↪ Inform staff of resignations within 48 hours of the employee's resignation/2 week notice, unless otherwise requested.
2. Decrease turn-around time for internal circulation of board minutes, so a draft can be available by staff meetings by November 2020.
3. Refine vehicle signup protocol to better coordinate vehicle reservation & department-wide ride-sharing during training by March 2021.
 - ↪ Investigate the best way to allow for remote reservation vehicles and implement.
 - ↪ Devise a system for assigning/volunteering for driving and ride-sharing for mass trainings for most efficient car-pooling (no one is left behind, everyone knows where they're going, what vehicle they're in, etc.).
4. When seeking district-wide feedback on proposed activities/plans, put topics to popular vote per the discretion of the District Manager by March 2021.

GOAL 6: Prepare Office Utilization Plans for each program & update the assets & equipment lists.

As staff are added or lost, programs acquire new equipment and materials, and records accumulate, efficient office utilization is crucial to sustainable District operation. Significant changes in staffing or resources can occur at any given time, and an office utilization plan(s) for the shared and program-specific spaces guides decision-making when changes arise.

 **WHEN: Review at the end of each calendar year, starting in 2020.**

TACTICS:

1. Conduct an annual review of each programs' office space capacity and requirements in relation to the current workload of current staff capacity.
2. Conduct an annual review of the current physical storage capacity and requirements.
 - ↪ Conduct a review of the Records Retention Policy with staff every 2 years and incorporate the SOP into new staff training.
 - ↪ Enforce Retention Policy and discard items that have exceeded retention requirements. items passed retention requirements.
3. Review & update the master list of District assets & equipment as part of this review.
 - ↪ Evaluate the usefulness of and need for excess or reserve equipment versus available storage space, and follow the Asset Liquidation Policy to dispose of unneeded equipment. the master tracking equipment list annually as part of this review.

Strategic Initiative 5:

Increase Information Technology (IT) Capacity.

Though the technology committee exists, a single person has become the de facto IT person (IT 1). He spends more than half of his time addressing in-house IT problems, contacting outside vendors to fix server & geodatabase issues, and researching and bidding out District technology needs. Because of the extensive IT needs of the staff and District operations, this individual is juggling the work of two full time positions. This duality creates inefficiencies, forcing staff to choose between his delegated tasks and the needs of the rest of the office to achieve their delegated tasks.

Even though the District has attempted to provide secondary IT assistance by designating point people, staff continue to come to IT1 because their designated point person is often unable to fix the issues, due to lack of knowledge, contacts to servers, or IT access permissions. When “unfixable” problems occur, three people are now pulled away from their daily workload – the staff who had the problem, the point person trying to solve the problem, and IT1 who will ultimately fix the problem. In addition to reducing the efficiency of the District’s core functions, having multiple people who only dabble in IT leaves our systems vulnerable to user error because permissions must be opened up and mistakes are easily made by those not overly familiar with the systems, leading to deleted files, system glitches, etc. Furthermore, IT1 lacks the time and resources to train the point people to assist with basic issues, because he must also perform his own work functions. Because of all of this, if this individual were to become unavailable for any reason, the District could not simply ask existing staff to step into the IT role without leaving a gap in the District core services.



KEY INDIVIDUALS:

↔ District Manager

↔ IT

↔ Technology Committee

↔ Board of Directors

↔ District staff



GOAL 1: Review & revise IT responsibilities.



WHEN: Complete by July 2021.



TACTICS:

1. Evaluate and pursue one of the following options & update job descriptions accordingly:
 - ↔ Explore outsourcing additional IT functions, OR
 - ↔ Transition the existing IT staff member to a full time IT and rehire for the technician position,
 - ↔ Hire a full-time, permanent IT person, OR
 - ↔ Hire additional support for delegated activities.
2. Fully train one IT backup staff.
3. Generate detailed record/instruction on all IT-related tasks.
4. Outsource some IT functions as needed.
 - ↔ Identify conditions, activities that would trigger outsourcing certain IT functions.
 - ↔ Identify which services (if any) that could be outsourced under specific conditions.



GOAL 2: Explore the following IT opportunities and needs.



WHEN: 2020-2025.



TACTICS:

1. Investigate phone technology to improve communication and accessibility both during and in a post-covid-19 workplace.
 - ↪ Identify and track phone system issues to revisit the need for an independent phone system annually by November of each year, starting 2020.
 - ↪ Investigate the ability to forward calls to personal devices used for work, ability to send voicemails to email, etc. either as part of the existing system or as a new system.
2. Devise a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system by July 2021.
 - ↪ Identify staff to input, update, and manage the database.
3. Identify grants management software by January 2021.
4. Delegate all but critical duties to program staff to manage the website as a resource for the public and include information such as:
 - ↪ Review territory/service-type coverage and update the website to help the public identify the staff they need in December of each year. This information needs to be made available for all programs, as applicable.
 - ↪ FAQ pages for E&S Program & downloadable formats for all programs by January 2021,
 - ↪ Stormwater resources January 2021,
 - ↪ Partner service fee scheduled by July 2021.
5. Research Equipment/Software opportunities:
 - ↪ Determine the need and cost of providing jetpack/hotspot for in-field work by December 2021.
 - ↪ Determine the need and cost of obtaining backup (up-to-date) laptops/equipment that are always available for use at trainings and in the field by June 2022.
 - ↪ Research expanded drone usage by January 2022.
 - ↪ Obtain 1 additional GPS survey unit by January 2022.
 - ↪ Obtain more engineering software and transition away from CAD for non-NRCS work by September 2020.
6. Transition the E&S department to modern digital formats by January 2025.

Strategic Initiative 6:

Improve Public Perception.

The purpose of this initiative is to strengthen the District's place as a leader within the community. By building community awareness of the District's activities and services to county residents, the District not only advertises itself as a resource to new clients, but also builds cooperative relationships with existing clients and potential funders. Another aspect of improving perception is taking pride in the face presented to the public, which includes managing the physical space of the District for the needs of the staff and clients.



KEY INDIVIDUALS:

- ↪ District Manager
- ↪ Banquet Committee
- ↪ Employee Relations Committee
- ↪ Board of Directors
- ↪ Education & Outreach Staff



GOAL 1: Build community awareness to improve and maintain public perception of District operations.

 **WHEN: Complete by 2022, review annually.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Create a marketing plan about District services and successes in the county.
 - ↔ Design more items with the District logo for use with clients by July 2022.
 - ↔ Design marketing strategies focused on impacts to watershed and simple cost-benefit summaries of BMPs to water quality improvements by January 2022.
 - ↔ See Education Program’s Strategic Initiative 1 Goal 1.
2. Leverage the Annual Banquet as an outreach opportunity to gain new conservationist supporters by March 2022.

 **GOAL 2: Improve physical space.**

 **WHEN: 2021-2025.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Evaluate office and storage space for growing needs by January 2021.
2. Increase security & improve client reception protocols by January 2022.

Strategic Initiative 7:

Minimize Indiscriminate Mission Creep & Prepare for Decisive Expansion of Services.

As the conservation needs of the county grow in the midst of regulatory pressures and economic changes, the District strives to identify new funding opportunities to maintain and expand its services for the county. Problems arise when potential funding sources or regulatory delegation opportunities fail to adequately support new or existing activities. Historically, this has led to the over-extension of the District’s staff and resources. New funding opportunities for specific programs or activities may exert pressure on the District to accept funds to support one program area, overstressing the District’s capacity to continue original activities. The District recognizes the need to be more selective in the work it pursues, but also wants to ensure that valuable opportunities are not lost.



KEY INDIVIDUALS:

↔ District Manager

↔ Program Managers

↔ Board of Directors

↔ E&S, Education, & Watershed Staff

 **GOAL 1: Develop selection criteria for accepting grants and for new program development.**

 **WHEN: Develop & Implement by July 2021.**

 **TACTICS:**

1. Develop selection criteria for accepting grants and for new program development by July 2021.
2. Re-evaluate certain agreements that require significant staff time and resources to administer. Complete by July 2021.



GOAL 2: Evaluate the need for expansion to address post-construction stormwater more comprehensively.

Stormwater runoff impacts water quality and soil loss in ways that cannot be ignored. The volume and velocity of stormwater can damage BMPs, slough off stream banks, flood operation sites, and carry contaminants directly to surface and groundwater. Increasingly, local and regional conversations are centered around stormwater, but Lancaster County lacks a centralized system to provide resources and guidance for post-construction stormwater management. Though the District deals with aspects of stormwater in its regular programs, no District program directly addresses all or most of the facets of stormwater management. Many staff feel that at this time, the District is not positioned to take on more activities; however, many of the staff and external partners have identified this need for improved stormwater services. Stormwater services are a general concept that could take many forms (MS4 project/grant assistance, stormwater model ordinances, etc.), and at this time, the District lacks the resources to undertake such additional activities. However, other districts have successfully managed stormwater resources to aid their municipalities; therefore, it is valuable for the District to begin investigating how other counties manage stormwater activities and what role Lancaster should play in the stormwater conversation post-2025.



WHEN: 2022-2025+.



TACTICS:

1. Direct clients in need of post-construction stormwater assistance to other resources, unless services fall under current E&S or Watershed Program activities by August 2020.
2. Conduct research into sustainable stormwater programming design and implementation in conjunction with municipalities.
 - Reach out to Blair County Conservation District (Donna Fisher & Chelsey Engler) to discuss the creation of their stormwater organization by November 2022.
 - Begin discussions with local municipalities about their stormwater needs and collaboration opportunities by November 2023.
3. Be prepared to begin designing a program by December 2025 and consider the following as possible elements of a Stormwater Program.
 - Investigate a small scale stormwater funding bank in collaboration between the E&S, watershed, and education departments to be utilized by individuals implementing stormwater management BMPs on their property to contribute to a more permanent system of providing stormwater management resources through the District.
 - Investigate promotion opportunities of stormwater BMPs leveraging existing municipal rain gardens and the Farm & Home Center as possible resources.
 - Advocate for collaboration between municipalities, watershed organizations, and the Conservation District to facilitate grant opportunities.
 - Advocate for regulations at the municipal level that allow residents to go above and beyond required stormwater management without restriction.

Distribution & Implementation

The final written version of the strategic plan will be officially adopted by LCCD Board of Directors and distributed to new and current partners and all partners who were invited to and/or participated in the Annual Planning Meetings of 2019 & 2020. In order to best distribute the plan to our community stakeholders, the plan will be made available electronically on our website and emailed or mailed to partners. Presentations will be given to municipalities and pertinent partners. A number of printed copies will be made available for key collaborators and staff members. In addition to this printable document publicly available to partners and staff, an electronic progress report tool (e.g. excel or similar) will be developed for internal tracking of plan implementation. As part of the development of this tool, District personnel will be designated to oversee the various tasks related to specific strategies & tactics. Staff and directors will have the opportunity to review the final plan document and accompanying tool to assess levels of progress and completion of each initiative. Segments of the plan will be reviewed at each monthly board meeting and each annual planning meeting. In the following years, a biannual executive strategic planning review session will be also held. The regular review and revision process allows LCCD to respond promptly to an ever-changing environment. This prompt response to change generates a long-term resiliency which permits the District to better serve Lancaster County.



Appendix 1- Phase I Brainstorming Questionnaire

Reviewing and Redefining Program Goals & Objectives. Please use the following questions to help shape the discussion and add your own questions as needed. This document can/should be used as a notes/discussion page to build the excel template.

A. GOAL 1: Review & Redefine Program Objectives to Conserve Natural Resources

1. Define Tangible Deliverables (Objectives)
 - a) Does the current program structure address current environmental issues and needs of the community at large?
 - (1) ID where it does well (what could be continued)
 - (1) ID where it falls short (what can be fixed?)
 - b) Does the current program structure meet the needs of the clients?
 - (1) ID where it does well (what can be continued)
 - (1) ID where it falls short (what can be fixed)
 - c) Is the program structure sustainable? How can it be improved?
 - (1) What jobs/services exist and what should be added/removed to better serve the community and environment?
 - (2) Within jobs/positions, what tasks can be streamlined/added/removed?
 - d) Is the program structure responsive and/or resilient to external pressures?
2. Strategies to achieve deliverables
 - a) How can we achieve objectives?
 - b) What obstacles exist?
 - c) What obstacles exist?
 - d) Who is responsible for implementing these strategies?
 - e) How can we measure achievements?
 - f) Which are short/mid/long-term strategies?

B. GOAL 2: Build & Maintain Capacity for sustainable increases in activities/services

1. Define Objectives - What does staff need to do their jobs?
 - a) Office space, technology, etc.?
 - b) Resources/trainings?
 - c) Incentives?
 - d) New, improved, or removed SOPs & Policies?
 - e) Other things?
 - f) Culture?
2. Strategies to achieve objectives (1-8 strategies per objective)
 - a) How can we achieve objectives?
 - (1) What obstacles exist?
 - (2) How can obstacles be overcome?
 - b) Who is responsible for implementing these strategies?
 - c) How can we measure achievements?
 - d) Which are short/mid/long-term strategies?

C. GOAL 3: Fiscal Resource Management: Increase financial support to the level needed for changes in programs/activities/services and the long-term sustainability of the organization.

1. Define Objectives – Think about the following:
 - a) What funding opportunities already exist that are in use?
 - b) What funding opportunities are being underutilized?
 - c) What are new funding opportunities?
 - d) What strings are attached to various funding opportunities?
 - e) Sustainable funding streams?
 - f) How does funding relate to the other goals and their objectives?
 - g) What impact does this program’s funding have on other District Programs?
2. Strategies to achieve objectives
 - a) How can we achieve objectives?
 - (1) What obstacles exist?
 - (2) How can obstacles be overcome?
 - b) Who is responsible for implementing these strategies?
 - c) How can we measure achievements?
 - d) Which are short/mid/long-term strategies?

D. GOAL 4: Collaborative Partnerships: Maintain & Enhance social, political, and economic climate

1. Define Objectives –Desired Relationships with the following partners (At minimum, 5 objectives, but may have objectives for multiple partners)
 - a) State Entities (SCC, DEP, PA DEPT of Ag)
 - b) Legislators
 - c) NRCS
 - d) Non-profits
 - e) Industry Partners
2. Strategies to achieve objectives (strategies could be partner specific)
 - a) How can we achieve objectives?
 - b) What obstacles exist?
 - c) How can obstacles be overcome?
 - d) Who is responsible for implementing these strategies?
 - e) How can we measure achievements?
 - f) Which are short/mid/long-term strategies?

Appendix 2 - Phase II Staff Survey

1. In your experience, what are the top 3 challenges the District currently faces? Please list them in order of greatest importance to least importance and BE AS SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE.
 - Example a: Board members are...For example...
 - Example b: Administrative staff needs more support. For example, we need...
2. What, if any, other natural resource issues should the District take on? (e.g. SLF, odor management/air quality, residential stormwater, alternative energies, light/noise pollution, flood control, etc.).
3. If there were no limitations and you could change anything about the way the District operates, what things would you change? Please be specific. (Please list no more than 4).
4. Please rank the following issues in order of priority you believe the District should give them over the next 5 years. (e.g. 1 is least important, 16 is most important):
 - Increased/improved marketing of District Image
 - More Fleet vehicles (watershed, compliance, etc.)
 - Fleet vehicle appearance (color/logo) or type (trucks/SUVs vs. Subaru)
 - Knowledge/staff retention
 - Human Resource (staff or on retainer) to make sure policies meet regulations address any in-office issues that arise.
 - Centrally managed funding
 - Annual funding appeal
 - Identify new funding opportunities
 - Increase staff salary & opportunities for horizontal/vertical movement
 - Improve office culture/morale
 - Evaluate District size (space/materials/staff/programs)
 - Remote Operations
 - More efficient Technology
 - Improved training
 - BOD development/engagement
 - Other
5. If you ranked “Other” as a high priority, please clarify here.

Appendix 3 - Phase II Board of Directors Survey

1. Below are issues that impact LCCD staff – their ability to do work, to have an impact in the community, and make a living. Please choose 4-5 issues that you as a board member would like to see prioritized for the next 5 years.

- Increased/improved marketing of District Image
- Acquiring additional Fleet vehicles (watershed, compliance, etc.
- Fleet vehicle needs: type (trucks/SUVs vs. Subaru) & appearance (color/logo)
- Staff retention
- Knowledge retention when staff transition away from LCCD
- Human Resource Administration (staff position or contracted/retainer services) to ensure policies meet regulations and are effectively followed/implemented.
- Centrally managed funding/Grant Management
- Annual funding and fundraising appeal
- Identify new funding opportunities
- Increase staff opportunities for horizontal/vertical movement
- Employee salary & benefits comparisons
- Options to improve office culture/morale
- Right-sizing (staff and space) for program needs
- Remote operation (ability to work from home/field, remote desktop server, etc.)
- Using technology to be more efficient
- Training needs and opportunities for new staff
- Needs and opportunities for BOD development/engagement
- Other (please specify)

The District administers 4 key conservation programs in Lancaster County: Agricultural Resource Conservation, Erosion & Sedimentation Control, Watershed Restoration & Protection and Environmental & Conservation Education. Please answer the following questions related to each of these program areas.

2. Agricultural Resource Conservation Program. Please rank the following services within the Ag Program from most important (1) to least important (9).

- Ag Conservation Education and Outreach
- Ag BMP implementation
- Ag Conservation Planning
- Nutrient Management Planning and Compliance
- Acting as program verifier/permit regulator
- Provide technical services & assistance
- Chesapeake Bay Compliance (paperwork inspections - current)
- Chesapeake Bay Compliance (Ag BMP Implementation inspections - potential)
- Provide BMP grant administration and financial assistance

3. Erosion & Sedimentation Control (Land use/development controls). Please rank the following services within the E&S Program from most important (1) to least important (6).

- Conservation Education and Outreach
- Acting as 102 program verifier/ permit regulator
- Provide technical services & assistance
 - Acting as 105 program verifier/ permit regulator
 - 102 Program - Land use/development controls
 - 105 Program - Land use/development controls

4. Watershed Restoration & Protection. Please rank the following services within the Watershed Program from most important (1) to least important (8).

- Conservation Education and Outreach
- Stream restoration/stabilization projects
- Stream health monitoring/watershed assessment
- Stream side buffer Implementation
- Dirt & gravel /low volume road program
- Floodplain mgt. and flood control
- Legacy Sediment Mitigation
- Provide BMP grant administration and financial assistance

5. Environmental and Conservation Education & Outreach. Please rank the following services within the Education Program from most important (1) to least important (8)

- Community Outreach & Education about Conservation – Newsletter, Social media, Blogs, News articles
- Envirothon Programming for (3rd grade to Sr. High) schools
- Conservation School
- Natural Resource Educational programming for adults
- In-school Environmental and Natural Resource Conservation educational programming for youth
- Spotted Lanternfly/Invasive Species Control
- Provide technical services & assistance
- Provide grant administration and financial assistance

6. From your perspective, are there any topics/issues that you feel the District should consider administering? *E.g. Odor Management, Expanded BMP Grant Management, Stream health monitoring/watershed assessment, Floodplain mgt. and flood control, Air quality, Light pollution, Energy conservation/Alternative Energy Support, Invasive Species Control, Chesapeake Bay Compliance (Ag BMP Implementation inspections), Stormwater Management, residential/urban stormwater, etc.*

7. Do you have any additional comments?

Appendix 4 Phase II Partner Survey

1. What purpose do you believe the Lancaster County Conservation District (LCCD) serves in the community?
2. What do you expect from your interactions with LCCD?
3. The District administers 4 key conservation programs in Lancaster County: Agricultural Resource Conservation, Erosion & Sedimentation Control, Watershed Restoration & Protection and Environmental & Conservation Education. Please select the current or potential District activities that you believe are most impactful for improving/protecting natural resources in the county.
 - Provide technical services & assistance
 - Provide grant administration and financial assistance
 - Ag BMP implementation
 - Ag Conservation Planning
 - Nutrient Management Planning and Compliance
 - Odor Management
 - BMP Grant Management
 - Stream restoration/stabilization projects
 - Stream health monitoring/watershed assessment
 - Stream side buffer Implementation
 - Community education and outreach about Conservation – Social Media, blogs, news articles
 - Envirothon Programing (3rd -12th grade)
 - Conservation School
 - Natural Resource Educational programming for adults
 - In-school Environmental and Natural Resource Conservation educational programming for youth
 - 102 Program - Land use/development controls
 - 105 Program - Land use/development controls
 - Floodplain mgt. and flood control
 - Dirt & gravel/low volume road program
 - Air quality
 - Energy conservation/Alternative Energy Support
 - Spotted Lanternfly/Invasive Species Control
 - Chesapeake Bay Compliance (paperwork inspections)
 - Chesapeake Bay Compliance (Ag BMP Implementation inspections)
 - Stormwater Management
 - Acting as program verifier/ permit regulator
 - Other (please specify)
4. How (or in what program areas) would you like to collaborate with the District in the next 5 years?
5. Do you have other thoughts or feedback to share with the District?
6. Which agency/organization/partnership do you represent?