

2020-2025 LONG RANGE PLAN

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Tranquillity Resource Conservation District is to protect, conserve, and restore natural resources through locally led education and implementation activities that support a healthy environment and provide economic sustainability through wise land use.

HISTORY

Soil Conservation Districts, now known as Resource Conservation Districts or RCD's, were formed in the 1930's after the unparalleled ecological disaster known as the Dust Bowl. At the present time almost every county in the United States has a conservation district. Fresno County has several Districts, voluntarily organized by landowners under the provisions of Division 9 of the Public Resource Code of the State of California. The Tranquillity Resource Conservation District was active thorough approximately 2011-2012 before becoming nearly dormant. In 2019, TRCD was re-invigorated and is once again seeking to maximize its positive impact on the historic, and expanded TRCD area.

NATURAL RESOURCE PRIORITIES:

This Long-Range Plan identifies the following natural resources priorities in the District and defines the goals, objectives and actions necessary to address these priorities. The completion of all stated work is conditioned upon securing and maintaining adequate funding sources to support staff and the implementation of conservation practices.

NATURAL RESOURCE PRIORITIES

- WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY
- VEGETATION QUALITY
- SOIL QUALITY
- AIR QUALITY
- CLIMATE CHANGE
- SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE
- NATURAL RESOURCE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
- LOCALLY LED NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Priority: Water Quality and Quantity

GOAL: Clean and Abundant Surface Water and Groundwater for all Beneficial Uses within the area covered by TRCD in Fresno County.

Objective 1: Reduce sediment, nutrient and pesticide runoff into waterways

Actions:

- Promote and identify landowner incentives to implement best management practices to reduce sediment and nutrient runoff including buffer strips, filter strips, grassed waterways, crop residue, conservation tillage practices, nutrient management, irrigation water management and cover crops.
- Encourage best management practices to reduce pesticide runoff including scouting for weeds, disease, or pests and match the management plan to the weed, disease, or pest.

Objective 2: Implement practices that address drought conditions and promote practices that increase irrigation efficiency

Actions:

- Promote, emphasize and follow up on local development of surface and sub-surface drip irrigation
- Encourage Producers to utilize mobile Irrigation labs as available
- Lobby for irrigation efficiency practices to remain a top priority for local Farm Bill projects
- Plant non-irrigated native permanent vegetation
- Promote water conservation in website and publications
- Provide workshops on water conservation practices

Objective 3: Encourage practices that protect groundwater supplies and groundwater quality

Actions:

- Support the local and regional Groundwater Sustainability Plans
- Work with the GSAs to assist landowners with new groundwater quality monitoring
- Support groundwater recharge enhancement programs
- Assist with water budgeting and other long term water management planning

Objective 4: Promote Off-Stream Storage

Actions:

- Encourage community discussions regarding off-stream storage.
- Cooperate, coordinate and collaborate to the maximum extent feasible in construction and operation of recharge and retention basins throughout the TRCD service area.
- Promote On Farm Recharge projects such as the Terranova Project

Objective 5: Encourage practices that slow flows and detain water in the upper watershed

Actions:

- Investigate opportunities to assist foothill landowners implement conservation practices
- Engage in cooperative, coordinated and collaborative efforts to enhance the concept of One Watershed understanding and operation to the maximum benefit of all watershed interests and stakeholders – Catchment to Groundwater.

Priority: Vegetation Quality

GOAL: Healthy Forest, Grazing, Farm Border, and Riparian Vegetation

Objective 1: Reduce Invasive Species

Actions:

- Seek grant funding for projects to reduce invasive species
- Provide educational materials to help landowners identify and eradicate invasive weeds

Objective 2: Focus wildlife habitat restoration on marginal agricultural lands

Actions:

- Gauge landowner interest in ideal locations
- Participate with the Fresno County Farm Bureau and Ag Commissioner to ensure projects are implemented on marginal Ag lands, Safe Harbor Agreements are considered and neighboring Ag is protected.

Objective 3: Promote the implementation of cover crops

Actions:

- Promote utilizing vegetation for soil health improvement, as well as more drought tolerant varieties that support native pollinators and other beneficial insects

Objective 4: Implement fuel reduction practices in the forest lands

Actions:

- Cooperate, coordinate and collaborate to the maximum extent possible with Sierra RCD and the Tulare Basin Watershed Partnership Network in achieving comprehensive whole watershed enhancements.
- Seek grant funding with and through the Southern Sierra IRWM group and the Kings IRWM group, as available, to reduce dangerous fuel loads

Objective 5: Encourage conservation grazing practices

Actions:

- Encourage off-stream water development and fencing for improved livestock distribution
- Consider Drought Management plans and other contingency planning

Objective 6: Encourage the utilization of native plants whenever possible

Actions:

- Promote native vegetation on the website, in publications and social media
- Encourage planting of non-irrigated vegetation
- Promote water-wise landscaping and irrigation techniques and encourage planting for enhancement of soil health
- Create native plant nurseries to enhance availability of native plants

Priority: Soil Quality

GOAL: Healthy Productive Soil that Sustains Agriculture

Objective 1: Increase residual plant matter in the soil

Actions:

- Promote Conservation Tillage; no till and reduced tillage practices
- Promote CDFA Healthy Soils Program
- Promote the implementation of cover crops generally and specifically drought resistant cover crops

Objective 2: Protect soil by reducing erosion

Actions:

- Promote cover crops
- Promote winter plantings
- Promote vegetated streambanks and canal banks

Priority: Air Quality

GOAL: Meet California Clean Air Standards

Objective 1: Promote renewable energy

Actions:

- Encourage solar, wind, and other forms of renewable energy

Objective 2: Reduce CO₂ and pollutants

Actions:

- Implement practices and projects to reduce dust and/or pollutant emissions (cover crops, windbreaks, diesel engine replacement, road treatment, etc.).
- Promote practices that address Climate Change, such as Carbon Farming, Renewable Soil Amendments and Composting
Promote Conservation Tillage; no till and reduced tillage practices

Priority: Sustainable Agriculture

GOAL: Keep Agriculture Sustainable in Fresno County

Objective 1: Assist landowners with regulations

Actions:

- Keep abreast of current and pending regulations
- Identify areas to provide pro-active or reactive assistance to landowners

Objective 2: Promote the environmental benefits provided by agriculture

Actions:

- Create Fresno County Grown to promote farmers as “Stewards of the Land”
- Utilize the TRCD website
- Participate in the Development of a Fresno County Grown Agriculture Learning and Commodity Center.
- Promote Ag Tourism

Objective 3: Promote Ag/Conservation Easements

Actions:

- Gauge Landowner interest in Easements
- Gain knowledge in creation of easements and monitoring

Objective 4: Protect prime agricultural lands

Actions:

- Keep abreast of local government zoning and use regulations
- Lobby for renewal of Williamson Act contracts
- Assist farmers with issues relating to climate change

Objective 5: Explore and promote use of agricultural by-products

Actions:

- Collect and distribute innovative ways of dealing with agriculture by-products

Priority: Natural Resource Educational Programs

GOAL: Well Rounded Natural Resource Educational Programs and Outreach throughout the District

Objective 1: Provide Farmer/Landowner/Stakeholder Educational Outreach

Actions:

- Facilitate timely and efficient workshops that promote conservation practices
- Create, expand and enhance the Fresno County Grown Program
- Assist with the creation of a Fresno County Grown Center
- Participate in the NRCS Regional Workgroup Meetings
- Participate in the CARCD and the CARCD Region 9 Meetings and programs
- Install exhibits at Fresno County Farm Expos
- Attend meetings and make presentations

Objective 2: Provide Youth Educational Outreach

Actions:

- Participate in youth programs as funding allows
- Participate in CARCD programs such as the annual Speak-Off Contest
- Assist with the development of new educational venues and programs

Objective 3: Provide Community Outreach

Actions:

- Create a TRCD Newsletter and Website
- Seek funding to create publications to promote conservation as needed

Priority: Locally Led Natural Resources Management

GOAL: Natural Resource Management Driven by Local Needs Facilitated by a strong and viable Resource Conservation District

Objective 1: TRCD maintains good business practices that exceed the minimum requirements of California Resource Conservation Districts

Actions:

- Adopt Annual Budget and modify as needed
- Complete Annual Audits
- Review Monthly Financial Reports
- Review and Update Long Range Plan as needed
- Complete Annual Plans
- Develop Fee for Service Opportunities
- Obtain overhead fees from all projects (if allowed)
- Assist CARCD and other conservation strategy groups with efforts to obtain state funding for RCDs
- Fulfill all meeting requirements required by the Brown Act
- Keep All TRCD Policies/Protocols up to date
- Maintain staff to run the day to day affairs of the District

Objective 2: Secure and retain knowledgeable staff to address the natural resource priorities in the District

Actions:

- Provide ongoing training
- Share staff with other RCDs when necessary

Objective 3: Cooperate with the Fresno Local Agency Formation Commission to complete a sphere of influence modification and annexation

- Provide education and outreach on benefits of RCDs
- Provide education and outreach on purposes and priorities of TRCD
- Identify landowners who wish to be included in the annexation and those who do not to reduce annexation and transition issues
- Communicate regularly and coordinate with neighboring and umbrella special districts to minimize conflicts in operations and implementation of goals, objectives and actions

Objective 4: Promote the good work of the TRCD

Actions:

- Newspaper articles and other publications
- Participation in community events
- Regular presentations to Board of Supervisors (annual or 2X/year)

Objective 5: Maintain an active and engaged Board of Directors and encourage associate directors

Actions:

- Keep current, Form 700 and Ethics Training
- All areas of District and all land uses are represented on the Board
- Encourage new associate directors
- Provide ongoing educational and participatory opportunities for director engagement

Objective 6: Maintain strong partnerships

Actions:

- Participate in other entities meetings and events

Adopted June 8, 2020