

## 5-Year Plan (2008 to 2013)

### Snohomish Conservation District

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#### **Organization of the Snohomish Conservation District**

Snohomish Conservation District was organized, after a favorable referendum, on June 2, 1941. At that time, only part of Snohomish County was included, and it was named Snohomish County Soil Conservation District. In 1947, all of Snohomish County formerly excluded (except cities and towns) was brought into the District. In 1961, that part of Island County called Camano Island was added, and the District name changed to Snohomish Conservation District. All cities incorporated after June 2, 1941, remain within the District.

Snohomish Conservation District is a political subdivision of the State of Washington – authorities, powers and structure contained in RCW 89.08.

The District has no direct jurisdiction and authority over natural resources. Its responsibility lies primarily in working with owners and users of land and resources. The District, however, does work with administrators of public land on works affecting land and resources. In such activities, the District works with the public and private sectors on mutual problems and opportunities where respective interests need to be correlated.

Snohomish Conservation District (SCD) is located in northwest Washington State between Puget Sound and the Cascade Mountains, approximately 30 miles north of the City of Seattle. The District covers most of Snohomish County and Camano Island, which is part of Island County. Total area that the District covers is 2,112 square miles of mainland and 40 square miles on Camano Island.

#### **Topography**

Topography of the District ranges from flatlands and floodplains to steep hills and mountains. In the mountainous region, lakes are particularly scenic and used heavily for recreation. Puget Sound is the site of recreational boating, fishing, swimming and a shellfishery.

The Stillaguamish River system, with its two main branches, drains nearly one third of the mainland west to Puget Sound. The Sauk River drains the northeastern portion to the Skagit River. The Skykomish system drains much of the southern mainland, joining the Snohomish River System which outlets into Puget Sound at the City of Everett.

#### **Land Use**

The principle economic activities in the District have shifted over the last few decades from being predominantly agriculture and forestry, to retail/services, manufacturing, government, construction and agriculture/forestry. Agricultural activities have shifted to some degree from large commercial operations to a combination of large commercial; small, non-commercial; and specialty or direct-market operations. There is also growing interest in the production of crops for oil seed and bio-fuel production. The agricultural profile in the District includes (but is not limited to): thirty commercial dairies, a 15,000 acre private tree farm, many commercial stables, small commercial niche farming enterprises, alpaca, mink, egg farms, and a growing compost industry.

Land use in the District is dominated by forestland uses, which cover approximately 80% of the area. Ownership of District lands is mostly private, although there are large tracts of state and federal land on the mountainous, eastern side of Snohomish County.

Precipitation and temperature vary throughout the District depending on elevation and proximity to the Sound. Most of the area has a mild maritime climate on mainland areas. Lower temperatures and greater precipitation prevail in the inland and mountain areas.

## **Geology**

The geology of Snohomish County and Camano Island consists of bedrock, glacial deposits and alluvial deposits. The oldest geologic deposits in the District are found in the bedrock of the mountains to the east. The soils and geology of the foothills and Western region of the District were formed as the result of glacial activity. The last glacial event occurred between 20,000 and 14,000 years ago when a large glacier advanced down the Puget Sound from Canada. As it advanced, loose gravel was deposited by the glacier meltwaters directly on top of older glacial deposits. As it passed over Snohomish County and Camano Island, the sand and gravel materials consolidated under its weight forming an impermeable layer know as Vashon till. As the glacier receded, more meltwater-deposited gravels and sands were deposited over the till. The youngest geologic deposits are the alluvial deposits of the large river basins. These materials are sands and gravels carried by the streams down the hillsides and deposited in the valleys.

## **Soils**

There are approximately 40 different soil types within the District which vary widely in texture, drainage and other characteristics. Soils in the lowland river valleys tend to be deep, sandy, silty and/or loamy soils that are usually flood prone and therefore best suited to agriculture. Soils in the foothills and on Camano Island vary greatly in depth, texture and other characteristics. Much of these foothills are underlain by an impervious glacial layer, which can lead to high water tables. The more mountainous region in the eastern portion of Snohomish County also contains a wide variety of soils, which often include rock outcrops.

More detailed information is available for Camano Island in a published soil survey for Island County issued in August 1958 (currently out of print), and for Snohomish County area in a published soil survey issued in September 1982.

Soils information can also be found at the NRCS soils website:

[http://soils.usda.gov/survey/online\\_surveys/washington/#snohomish1983](http://soils.usda.gov/survey/online_surveys/washington/#snohomish1983)

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## **Function of the Snohomish Conservation District**

To make available technical, financial and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land manager in the conservation of soil, water and related natural resources.

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## **Who We Serve & Why**

The district serves any landowner within the District boundary, to assist in the protection and management of the natural resources by incorporating any number of best management practices that may be applicable to the property or landowner goals.

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## **Mission of the Snohomish Conservation District**

Snohomish Conservation District's mission is to work cooperatively with others to promote and encourage conservation and responsible use of natural resources.

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## Vision of the Snohomish Conservation District

Snohomish Conservation District is a primary resource available to all private landowners/land users to help address natural resource issues and concerns. Providing landowners with technical expertise, assistance in regulatory issues, and funding opportunities; the Conservation District is a critical link in the implementation of natural resource solutions on private land.

### Natural Resource Priorities and Goals:

- **Natural Resource Technical Assistance, Outreach & Education (included in all below)**

With Assessment	Without Assessment
By July 2013, increase knowledge and involvement of public in SCD by having an annual stakeholders planning session, consisting of 40 representatives from that number of interest groups.	By July 2013, increase knowledge and involvement of public in SCD by having an annual stakeholders planning session, consisting of 40 representatives from that number of interest groups with support for assessment and guidance for what they want and other funding sources .
By July 2013, expand on partnership with other organizations to leverage our staff and funding to increase the ability of all groups to serve the public including co-located office space and help and support (catalyst)other programs that tie into our programs.	

- **Water Stewardship (Quality, quantity, water recharge, livestock, manure management, fish habitat, storm water, LID, flooding, waste management)**

With Assessment	Without Assessment
By July 2013, 25% increase in programs across the board, follow-up on all activities after the year 2000 and 25% activities prior to the year 2000. One full time equivalent staff position dedicated to water quality monitoring, reporting, LID and stormwater issues. A fifty percent increase in cost-share funding, and a flood emergency response in place.	By July 2013, same existing contracts & services, minus stormwater, LID, and flooding services.

- **Farmland Preservation & Sustainable Agriculture**

With Assessment	Without Assessment
By July 2013, SCD will present a youth agriculture education program that will reach 1200 students, house an FTE to support farmland preservation on 500 acres, start four local marketing initiatives (CSAs, marketing coop, farmers markets, farm-to-school programs) and create a webpage on city farming.	By July 2013, SCD will present a youth agriculture education program that will reach 300 students, assist start-up of two farmers markets, and support 2 specialty or commercial agriculture processing facilities or enterprises.

- **Habitat (fish, wildlife, people)**

With Assessment	Without Assessment
By July 2013, SCD will restore / preserve 500 acres of fish, wildlife & backyard habitat, remove 25 barriers, enhance habitat on 12,000 feet of streams, and include district capacity to deliver habitat programs.	By July 2013, SCD will restore / preserve 250 acres of fish, wildlife & backyard habitat, remove 15 barriers, enhance riparian habitat on 7,500 feet of streams.

- **Land Management (Forest, firewise, deforestation, native plants, weeds, erosion, development, pasture, nutrient, chemical & pest management)**

With Assessment	Without Assessment
By 2013, SCD will provide technical assistance with the outcome of 150 conservation plans, 250-300 BMPs, 25 plans and 2000 contacts.	By 2013, SCD will provide technical assistance with the outcome of 50 – 75 conservation plans, 100-150 BMPs, 10 plans implemented and 500 contacts.

- **Alternative Energy Sources**

With Assessment	Without Assessment
By July 2013, the SCD will work with WSU Extension and other key entities to establish a cellulosic ethanol production facility in Snohomish County.	By July 2013, the SCD will purchase an alternative fuel vehicle and reduce its carbon footprint by 50%.

- **District Operations**

With Assessment	Without Assessment
By July 2013, small farm implement program in place, district operates a 2.5 – 3 million budget, adds 3 to 6 staff, district is co-housed with WSU, NRCS, FSA, DNR, Weed Board and has own area conference center, district operates out of a model farm acreage, plus the items listed in column without assessment.	By July 2013, the SCD will have completed a review of its strategic plan, and will have reviewed and updated its policy manual on an annual basis.

### **Critical Geographic Areas: (attached map)**

- Land adjacent to waterways
- River valleys (flood plains)
- Urban areas
- Stillaguamish River Basin, Snohomish River Basin, Camano Island, South County, Puget Sound

### **Trends Impacting Conservation in the Snohomish Conservation District**

- Increased development continues in Snohomish County, and with that brings new people to rural living and livestock ownership. Continued increase in the small farm program also brings increases in technical assistance, farm planning, and educational needs.
- Development in urban areas also brings an increased interest in low impact development strategies to not only landowners, but cities and local jurisdictions.
- Continued emphasis and interest in maintaining or enhancing habitat increases efforts needed within the habitat restoration program (including water quality monitoring) as well as the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).
- With all these programs comes an increasing need for engineering and design assistance as well as increased interest in cost-share and incentive programs.
- With an increased interest in sustainable agriculture (including forestry) and global change the district sees an increased need for crop production assistance as well as fire protection strategies.

### **Strategies to Address Trends**

- The district plans to bring staff levels up to meet the needs as best as possible. When the district is successful with an assessment there are opportunities to hire additional staff as needed including an urban liaison, education assistant, and forester.

### **Natural Resource Data:**

- Snohomish Basin TMDL, Stillaguamish River TMDL, French Creek Watershed Management Plan, Washington Department of Ecology 303d list, USFWS Endangered Species List, Washington State Cultural Resources database, National Resources Conservation Service Field Office Technical Guide, Snohomish County Code, Washington State University Extension, Washington State Clean Water Act, Puget Sound Plan, Quilceda/Allen Watershed Management Plan, Snohomish County State of the Waters, Washington State Water Quality Monitoring Plan, Snohomish Conservation District livestock surveys, Snohomish Basin Salmon Conservation Plan, Snohomish River Basin Chinook Salmon Near Term Action Agenda, the Governors Strategy for Salmon, Salmon Habitat Limiting Factors Watershed Resource Inventory for Island County, WRIA 7 plan, Washington Conservation Commission, Washington State Auditor, Stillaguamish Clean Water District Board, Snohomish County.

### Staffing Needs

- The staff positions needed to carry out the plan of the Snohomish Conservation District based on the above information is to maintain current staffing levels, however should an assessment be achieved the district will be looking towards hiring 3 additional staff.
- Current levels: District Manager, Administrative Assistant, Grants Administrator, Office Assistant, Info/Education Coordinator, Education Intern, Lead Small farm Planner, 2 Small Farm Planners, 1 Small Farm/Dairy Planner, 2 Habitat Restoration and Water Quality Specialists, Water Quality Intern, Agricultural Engineer, Civil Engineer.
- Additional staff needed with Assessment (possibilities): Forester, Urban/Low Impact Development Liason, Education Assistant.

### Annual Budget Needs

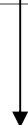
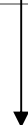
- The projected budget to meet current needs and requests from landowners and partners is approximately \$1.2 million dollars.
- The projected budget to meet the needs following an assessment approval is approximately \$2.0 million dollars.

### Key Decision Makers

- The key decision makers needed to carry out the plan of the Snohomish Conservation District is prioritized by the following:
  - SCD board members
  - SCD management
  - SCD staff
  - SCD constituents/partners

### Priority Actions – 12 Months

Action	Begin Date	End Date
1. Continue effort in outreach coordination with partners – county, WSU, etc.	Asap	None
2. Plan of action for next round of assessment related activities.		
3. Secure the lease for the building.		
4. Define the roles, expectations, and expertise of board members and associates.		
5. Add board members and/or associates with skill sets in energy background, accounting, legal, nursery or sustainable ag.		
6. Setting specific calendar for annual review of plans and policies prior to plan & budget submittal – consider quarterly review of progress.		



<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>7. Submit all required WSCC, County and Ecology documents in a timely manner.</li><li>8. Use the new BIAS software to help with budget planning monitoring – monthly or quarterly.</li><li>9. Develop a new employee orientation packet and process.</li></ol>		
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