



## **Long Range Business Plan (LRBP) Board Report**

1/7/21

### **Progress:**

- The Conservation Scope Advisory Committee (CSAC) held its last meeting on 12/11 where members reviewed and provided comment on draft LRBP goals and tactics (attached).
- Financial Sustainability Planning Team met to review and revise draft goals and tactics as well as the creation of a new Strategic Direction. The newly crafted Strategic Direction is now listed as #3 and states the following: “Ensure the District’s financial sustainability.”
- The Organizational Health Planning Team met to review and revise draft goals and tactics.
- Staff have participated in multiple meetings to discuss, refine and prioritize draft goals and tactics (distributed separately). The following are updates to the goals and tactics under review:
  - We have taken a departure from ensuring each goal is fully “SMART” (Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant Timebound) and have shifted focused to prioritizing goals and tactics under each Strategic Direction. After priority goals and tactics are confirmed by staff and board, we will circle back to determine key performance measures to track priority goals.
- Staff have discussed the anticipated impacts that the new LRBP priority goals and tactics are expected to have on current WMSWCD programming. The following summarizes these impacts:
  - Most programs will continue, though some will shift focus. Staff will assess equity outcomes, seek efficiencies, and address climate change to respond to the new LRBP’s focus on bringing people together and building community around our work.
  - Some program areas will increase in capacity and outputs; examples include school & community gardens, soil health, and communications.
  - Some program areas will reduce in focus or dedicated resources to allow for new efforts; examples include decreasing the volume of monitored sites and decreased cost-shares in health urban watersheds.
  - Many programs will sustain their current momentum and past investments; these include conservation planning, partner funding, healthy streams, forestry, farms, oak, and wetlands.
  - Some program areas will pivot to address community concerns; these include how we address invasive plants and invertebrate pests, and refocusing EDRR priorities.
  - Details on which staff focuses on new initiatives will be determined through the annual work planning process.

### **Upcoming Board Meeting Discussion & Decisions:**

- February:
  - Presentation: Community input received & key revisions made in response
  - Discussion: Provide input on LRBP Draft (including revised Principles & Values)
- March
  - Decision: Adopt LRBP

West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District (WMSWCD)

Conservation Scope Advisory Committee

Zoom Meeting

December 11, 2020, 4-6 pm

**Committee Attendees:** Ahmed Yusuf, Aliesje King, Brenda Sanchez, Gabe Sheoships, Indi Namkoong, Kim Galland, Megan Van de Mark, Mohamed Salim Bahamadi

**WMSWCD Staff:** Jim Cathcart, Laura Taylor, Mary Logalbo, Michael Ahr

**WMSWCD Board:** Terri Preeg Riggsby

There was unanimous support for having the meeting recorded.

Draft Meeting Notes Review

There were no changes offered to the November 10, 2020 meeting notes.

Revisiting the Use of the Phrasing “Black, Indigenous, and Communities of Color (BIPOC)” in the Long Range Business Plan (LRBP)

Mary gave a summary of the group’s discussion on this topic at the November 10, 2020 meeting and shared the perspectives of Ping Khaw, PKS International LLC, with respect of how the term BIPOC is viewed by the Community Engagement Liaisons that Ping works with – many of whom are from immigrant communities. In general Ping raised that some prefer the use of the term BIPOC but others Ping has talked with are neutral on the terminology. One pitfall of using the term is when it is used as a label when labelling is not necessary or desired. Should reference groups as specific as you can using the terms that group prefers.

- The use of the term is important – shared language about the history that the groups being referenced have shared. Use of the term centers on that.
- If we come across someone who does not like the term then be respectful of that person’s views and use the terminology that is comfortable with them.

Strategic Direction, SMART Goals & Tactics Updates

Mary introduced the latest version (Version 6, dated December 4, 2020) of the Strategic Directions, SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) Goals and Tactics.

Mary highlighted areas where WMSWCD staff have made adjustments based on the advisory committee’s feedback regarding climate change.

- Important to find/define our niche in addressing climate change.
- Need to be open to new ideas to how to use technology to improve practices.

- Incorporate traditional ecological knowledge into practices. Listen to the plants and what they may be telling us.
- Connecting this traditional ecological knowledge to western science. Traditional land management practices and knowledge are both resilient to climate change effects as well as lower the carbon output. The *Braiding Sweetgrass* (reciprocal relationship) approach. (This was reinforced by several other comments).
- Ties to fostering positive relationships with the land. Need to share or redistribute power in managing land to enable these approaches on a global scale.
- Has West Multnomah advocated on issues in the past? A lot of what is being talked about is about advocating for these traditional approaches to land management. (Mary and Terri responded that we do provide positions/opinions in the form of testimony and comment but there are some restrictions in our ability to do so.)
- That also challenges the [white] savior-ism piece in my experience - obviously it's not Indigenous communities responsibility to "solve" climate change with land management, but it would be cool to name that colonized land use patterns have created the problem and that beginning to reshape that use under the leadership of Indigenous folks is part of the solution
- History of SWCDs were born out of the dust bowl era (75 years ago) to address the related conservation issues contributing to the dust bowl. Displaced Indigenous tribes were already pointing out at that time that the western approach to farming was not sound. So in the context of continued displacement of tribes and ignoring their traditional knowledge, SWCDs were created with the charge to "discover" the solutions as if they didn't exist. And only "landowners" were empowered with the authority to do so; again when the traditional land managers were being displaced. Knowing this, it could be a great opportunity to share SWCDs' creation narrative along with this history of tribal involvement/engagement in the same.

Mary raised the topic of Land Acknowledgements.

- A lot of learning we need to do. Need to understand the history that is being acknowledged. That is just the beginning.
- What does it mean to use a land acknowledgement? Land acknowledgement is a commitment to action. What are we going to do to reverse the history of displacement we are acknowledging?

Mary raised the topic of Advisory Committees and tactics regarding the topics or focus advisory committees should be engaged with.

- Approaches to expanding the diversity of the Board through an advisory committee. Can be done more creatively than having 30 representatives meeting in a common place. Maybe it is smaller focus groups (listening sessions) from the communities that meet in advance to provide information to the advisory group.

- One goal is for Board members to develop relationships with these community advisory members.
- Would be interesting to see Board members come visit the advisory group communities rather than inviting the community members to come to the white dominated space of a Board meeting. With the latter, harm can occur quickly to the invited community members when there are not guardrails and strong facilitators in place to interrupt and dismantle the white supremacy culture that can be inherent in these spaces.
- Invite Board members to step into these community spaces to listen.
- Form the advisory group and ask the group what they feel they are comfortable or uncomfortable with.
- Works best to have the group focus on a topic that is well presented with background information and what is being asked of the committee.

Mary raised the topic of engaging cultural perspectives and bring this into our work. As an example, the District's approach to invasive weeds is a "war on plants" is contrary to the view that plants can teach us. Everything has a place.

- Could address this with a tribal Indigenous group that has veto power over some of the District operations so as to remove some of the power differential. Open ended, collaborative discussion with goal of consensus – but shared power to leverage.
- Doesn't make sense to do this in a vacuum as an organization; really needs to be a regional discussion as many SWCDs/organizations are working on invasive weeds.
- We need to chill out over the xenophobic reaction to invasive plants. (Yellow iris story). Value in slowing down and having the conversation here. Stop and engage people. What is their relationship with that plant? Can't just react.
- The International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) spectrum of public participation has been helpful when thinking about power sharing - a lot of agencies get stuck at "consulting", but we should be trying to move towards collaborating and empowering the community regarding invasive and other key decision points.  
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*Prepared by J. Cathcart, December 11, 2020. Reviewed and edits by M. Logalbo & M. Ahr, December 13, 2020. Edits incorporated by J. Cathcart, December 23, 2020.*

*Emailed draft to Advisory Committee Members for further review on 1/7/21, no edits were received*