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Strategic Plan 2023-2028

Mission Statement

The Ruby Valley Conservation District's (RVCD's) mission is to protect the land and preserve our heritage. To do so, the RVCD works with landowners and stakeholders to leave a positive lasting impression on the landscape through project implementation designed to identify and restore natural resources within the watershed, and educational opportunities designed to encourage community members to implement sustainable practices for the health of the land.

Future Vision

The Ruby Valley Conservation District will continue to work to improve the current state of the watershed through project implementation and educational opportunities, while expanding the scope of the topics we cover in education, creating a new Watershed Restoration Plan, and reestablishing the Ruby Watershed Council.

Goal #1: Education and Outreach

Continue to educate local landowners and community members about the watershed and best management practices for conservation. Continue marketing the CD's resources and events through physical and digital media sources.

EDUCATION

Goal: Educate the local community about water management and conservation through our annual events and other media resources.

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Annual Speaker Series: RVCD staff will design and administrate the Rancher Roundtable (January/February), Conservation/Small Acreages (March/April), and Wildlife (Summertime) Speaker Series on topics related to ranchers, small acreage landowners and specific wildlife species respectively. The former two events will start to include more coverage of local issues such as drought, water quality impairments and climate change.
- Kid's River Resource Day/Classroom Activities: RVCD staff will engage with elementary students to teach them about the watershed and conserving other natural resources through interactive lessons. For Kids River Resource Day, conservation educators will run a variety of educational stations at a local ranch. Some classes will discuss drought, water quality impairments and climate change.
- Fall Project Tour/Soil Tour: RVCD staff will lead a project tour for community members to either show what the RVCD's recently completed projects have achieved for the watershed and how similar projects could benefit landowners, or lead a soil tour in collaboration with a local landowner to demonstrate examples of various soil management practices.

OUTREACH

Goal: Continue to spread awareness about the CD's mission, resources and events through a variety of news sources, and continue to experiment with new and current sources to expand our reach.

Key strategies to accomplish this goal include:

- Monthly RVCD Newsletter: RVCD staff will design a monthly newsletter to be sent to our email subscribers. The newsletter will cover our upcoming events, current conservation stories and drought, project partners updates, and SWE reports to increase awareness of local conservation news.

- Monthly Natural Resource News Articles in the Madisonian: RVCD staff will write an article promoting the RVCD's events, resources and recent projects, in addition to other conservation-oriented information, once a month.
- Integrating Into Farmers Markets: RVCD staff will host a table at local farmers markets to share the RVCD's resources and accomplishments.
- Social Media: Upcoming events and volunteer opportunities, in addition to occasional educational posts, scenic pictures of Ruby Valley and other fun stuff will be posted to our Facebook and Instagram pages.
- Continue To Advertise Via: The Madisonian (through NRN and the monthly event calendar), Posters, Social Media, Newsletter, and Educational Events. Staff will encourage people to sign up for our newsletter at every opportunity as it is the best place to get information on the district.

Goal #2: Programs and Projects

Continue acquiring funding and monitoring for long-running annual programs in addition to any incomplete projects.

PROGRAMS

Goal: Ensure that ongoing programs continue to receive the necessary funding, staffing and maintenance to remain operational and continue to improve. Consider and discuss new long-term programs that will mutually benefit local landowners and the ecosystem/watershed.

- Livestock Carcass Composting Site: RVCD offers a free complimentary pick up service for lost livestock throughout the year. The program serves landowners that reside within the Conservation District Boundary. We can accept: Cattle, horses, sheep, goats and llamas. The compost site is currently located southeast from the Sheridan Dump Site. RVCD hopes to reuse the compost at the site to serve local ranchers.
- Stream Monitoring Program: RVCD began monitoring the Southern Tobacco Root Tributaries in 2018. In the fullest extent, the program had 25 sites across 8 tributaries to

monitor temperature and discharge. A team of community members volunteer to assist with collecting data.

- Pollinator Initiative: Seed mixes will be distributed for free to interested community members and our three pollinator gardens will be maintained (in Jackson's Garden, behind the office, and at the FFA Ranch on Carey Lane).
- Other Potential Programs: There would likely be public interest in programs that directly address water quality impairments and soil health. If the 2023 soil tour is a success, the RVCD will consider continuing that as an ongoing Perennial Event, and will also consider finding a way to implement water quality monitoring (metals, etc.) into the current stream monitoring program.

PROJECT PLANNING

Goal: RVCD staff will respond to local community member's needs and concerns regarding the Ruby Watershed and other local natural resources by planning and implementing upland and riparian projects.

- Identifying Resource Concerns: In addition to planning the new Watershed Restoration Plan, the RVCD will engage with the community to determine what projects are needed to protect the health of our watershed.
- Document and Prioritize Potential Projects: Through the medium of the new Watershed Restoration Plan and other strategic documents, the RVCD will determine which projects should be prioritized.
- Project Implementation: The RVCD will coordinate with stakeholders to identify the RVCD's role in the implementation of restoration projects.

Goal #3: Stream Permitting & Riparian Health

Continue supporting the health of our watershed and the surrounding riparian areas by clearly communicating with the community, following watershed policy and supporting and initiating more projects.

310 PERMITS

Goal: Have a FWP staff member and a board member visit the sites of all 310 permit applications monthly, and have the board approve or deny the application at each board meeting. Communicate requirements clearly to all applying landowners.

Goal #4: Organizational Longevity

Maintain the CD's current efforts while sustaining and expanding connections with partner agencies and volunteers, keeping files and data organized and accessible, and keeping future goals achievable and realistic.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY

Goal: Expand volunteer base to have more assistance with field work and projects, streamline and sustain current level of responsibilities as staff members are already at capacity, and create a new Watershed Restoration Plan (WRP).

- **Volunteers:** Staff members will continue to make efforts to increase our volunteer base. Consider new ideas for how to bring in new groups of volunteers (students, families, etc.).
- **Streamlining Operations:** Staff members will keep files organized, and use past documents and plans as blueprints for annual field work, events, and programs.
- **Annual Banquet/Additional Fundraising:** The administrative team will continue to organize the annual spring banquet to celebrate our accomplishments and raise money for the CD. Additional fundraising, grant applications and sponsorship opportunities will be pursued as needed for other events and projects.
- **Watershed Restoration Plan:** A new Watershed Restoration Plan (WRP) shall be designed and created by staff members to outline the current issues regarding water quality and quantity in the Ruby Watershed, and outline a plan to address issues in prioritized water sources in the next ten years. The plan will be modeled after the 2015 WRP and provided

data from the DEQ, and will build its priorities off of the information that we get from engaging with the community.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Goal: Maintain a positive work environment that promotes clear communication and a willingness to support one another with respective tasks. Additionally, sustain communication with board members and the Ruby Watershed Council, and consistently incorporate the BSWC member into annual plans.

- RVCD Board: Updates on financial records, 310 permits and recent work will be provided to board members at monthly board meetings. Board members will also be contacted on matters concerning outstanding organization purchases, relevant questions related to upcoming projects and ongoing programs, and to sign organization grants or agreements.
- Ruby Watershed Council: The Ruby Watershed Council shall be reassembled by staff members to hold annual meetings where council members will act as a sounding board for future projects and outreach events.
- Big Sky Watershed Corps Member: The annual BSWC member is a young conservation worker recruited by RVCD staff to take on a variety of responsibilities with the CD from January to November of each year. The stewardship director will supervise the member's efforts to complete tasks such as overseeing a large portion of the CD's education and outreach programs and events, running the Stream Monitoring Program, and implementing smaller-scale restoration projects when possible.

Chairman Signature

Board Member Signature

Board Member Signature

Board Member Signature

Stewardship Director Signature

Board Member Signature

Board Member Signature

Board Member Signature