

# 2021-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

PIERCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Over the course of 2020, Pierce Conservation District strived to engage the many influential stakeholders in our work. Through a series of visioning, future-casting, and workshopping sessions, we completed several feedback loops to co-create a strategic plan that reflects the capacity, needs, and culture of our staff, partners and communities. Thank you to our many partners, including county, city and tribal government representatives, Advisory Council Members, volunteers and residents of Pierce County for your input and recommendations throughout this planning process. We give special acknowledgement to Breanna Trygg of Trygg Consulting and her associate, Amber Huffstickler, for guiding us in accomplishing our planning goals, and the following groups and individuals that contributed to the development of this Strategic Plan:

- Pierce Conservation District Board of Supervisors
  - Jeanette Dorner, Chair
  - Cindy Haverkamp, Vice Chair
  - John Hopkins, Auditor
  - Scott Gruber, Member
  - Dr. Brian Sullivan, Member
  - Hannah Febach, Associate Supervisor
  - Don Gourlie, Associate Supervisor
  - Bill Schiller, Associate Supervisor
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  - Adam Reichenberger, Associate Supervisor
- Pierce Conservation Leadership & Staff
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  - Jayme Gordon, Habitat Improvement & Environmental Education Program Director
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  - Melissa Buckingham, Water Quality Program Director

- René Skaggs, Farm Planning & Agricultural Assistance Program Director
- Ryan Mello, Executive Director
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- Nicholas Cusick, Climate Resiliency Program Manager
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- Cynthia Ross, Finance Coordinator
- Madeleine Spencer, Harvest Pierce County Program Coordinator
- Kristine Swanner, Finance Administrative Assistant
- Chris Towe, Environmental Education Program Manager
- Nicole Warren, Puyallup-White River Farm Program Specialist

## EQUITY STATEMENT

The Pierce Conservation District practices equity and inclusion by listening and learning from our valued and diverse communities, and being ready to adapt and design more intentional or additional support so that we are equitable in the delivery of our programs and services.

We strive to serve all residents of Pierce County and recognize that people of color, indigenous communities, low income people, immigrants and refugees are disproportionately impacted by ecological decline. This often results in shorter life expectancy because of higher exposure to air and water pollution, less access to healthy food, impacts of climate change and lack of open space and a built environment that facilitates healthy lives.

We are fully committed to serving the people of Pierce County through the design and delivery of inclusive programming for all.

## ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

If you use assistive technology (such as a Braille reader, a screen reader, or TTY) and the format of this material interferes with your ability to access information, please [contact us](#). To enable us to respond in a manner most helpful to you, please indicate the nature of your accessibility problem, the preferred format in which to receive the material, and your contact information. Users who need accessibility assistance can also contact us by phone through the Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339 for TTY/Voice communication.

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\*To be included once separately approved by the Board of Supervisors. This statement is still undergoing review from the tribal nations in our service territory.

## MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

We often say “we are not your grandfather’s conservation district”. As our landscapes, natural resource concerns and people of Pierce County change, we take pride in evolving our work to offer relevant and sustainable solutions.

Our last 5-year strategic plan ushered in tremendous growth for Pierce Conservation District. We made our program delivery more targeted and aligned to those specific natural resource problems that our organization is uniquely equipped to tackle. From 2016 to today, we added new capacity and programming that includes: our Shore Friendly Program, a regional effort to protect and restore shoreline habitat; additional farm planning staff to expand the support we provide around soil health; climate change mitigation and resiliency programming; and resources for all of our programs to go deeper and have a bigger impact.

In these next five years, our plan is calling for an even more deliberate focus of our programming to not just solve problems, but to bring people together around solutions that work for everyone. As a result of engaging those most impacted by our work - our Board, staff, partners, and community members - in this planning process, we realized the need to critically examine the way our information, communication, and operating systems perpetuate or disrupt historical and current inequities. We are grateful to everyone who put so much thought and effort into this plan, and hope you see your contributions reflected here. No matter what environmental issues are calling us forward, the way we invest in our people and commit to serving our communities is what makes us effective at what we do - this is as much *people* work as it is *environmental* work. For this reason, the District commits to more clearly articulating the environmental and people-centered outcomes we desire for each of our nine strategic areas, knowing that the way we define, work toward, and measure success will have rippling effects on our communities.

This plan is our road map to how we will make a difference over the next five years. It is our guide to how we will partner with you and our community. It reflects our values, focus, and desire to be a productive partner in making our communities stronger and healthier. And, it demonstrates our commitment to serving *everyone*. What’s become clear to us is that, to address complex issues like racial inequities, rapid population growth and development in our region, disappearing farmland, climate change, dwindling salmon and orca populations and public health crises like COVID, we need an adaptive management approach to meet and respond to the challenges of our time - *science isn’t enough*. **We invite you to join us - we know the way forward is *together*.**

Sincerely,



Ryan N. Mello, Executive Director



Jeanette Dorner, Chair, Board of Supervisors

## VISION

Pierce Conservation District's vision is a Pierce County with thriving ecosystems and resilient communities.

## MISSION

Pierce Conservation District's mission is to equitably support community-driven solutions to our most pressing local environmental challenges.

# DISTRICT VALUES

Our work is driven by a commitment to the vitality of every ecosystem and every person in Pierce County. We orient ourselves to this work using the following guiding values.

## EQUITY

We are committed to serving all people. Everyone deserves access to clean water, thriving habitat, sustainable soil and healthy food.

## INTEGRITY

We are honest and transparent. We do what we say we will do and uphold the highest standards of ethical behavior.

## STEWARDSHIP

We steward the natural resources of Pierce County with care for today and future generations. We use our financial resources wisely to do the most good.

## EXCELLENCE

We strive for excellence in everything we do. We always seek to improve our practices in order to provide innovative solutions to ever-changing conditions.

## COLLABORATION

We partner with the people of Pierce County, local governments and organizations to conserve our natural resources in a non-regulatory and collaborative way.

## COMMITMENT TO PEOPLE

We do our work, first and foremost for the people of this community and the people to come. We treat everyone with respect and dignity. We are committed to our staff and creating a supportive, team-oriented workplace.

## DISTRICT SCOPE

The District's Scope is defined by the high priority areas for habitat function, water quality improvement and natural resource protection within the four main watersheds of Pierce County as defined by District partner jurisdictions, tribal governments, regional Salmon Recovery Lead Entities, Local Integrating Organizations and other partner agencies and organizations. Nearly everything the District does is in partnership and support of others' goals and priorities. Every project is identified as a priority by our partners and guided through stakeholder feedback and direction or is an implementation of a project already identified in an approved natural resource improvement plan.



The priority restoration areas of the four major watersheds of Pierce County determine the District's scope of work.



## TRIBAL TREATIES STATEMENT\*

Pierce County includes 1,806 square miles of ceded lands of four Federally recognized Tribes: the Puyallup Tribe, the Nisqually Tribe, the Muckleshoot Tribe, and the Squaxin Island Tribe. These Tribes are sovereign governments that predate the founding of the United States, and their sovereignty is an inherent right that has existed since time immemorial, recognized with a government-to-government relationship by the United States<sup>1</sup>.

We recognize that the traditional and current homelands of these Tribes and their territorial lands, waters, and air are contiguous and transcend U.S. government-established boundaries. This means the quality and abundance of the County's natural resources directly affects the quality and abundance of natural resources of Tribal Nations.

The Pierce Conservation District is a non-regulatory entity, and while we do not hold federal trust responsibilities, we recognize that the Pierce Conservation District works to conserve natural resources that are the foundation of a Tribes' rights to their ceded land. We practice equity by understanding the historical and cultural context of the land we steward, and the people, cultures, and communities the health of the land impacts.

Tribal governments have their own programs and organizations dedicated to conservation, with standards that often exceed County, State, and even National guidelines. We are thus dedicated to making sure our efforts complement and support the important conservation work of the Tribes around us. Without sustainable natural resources, the United States government cannot meet its federal trust responsibility to Tribes. We also recognize that natural resources have physical, cultural, ceremonial, spiritual, and historical meaning to Tribal Nations, and take seriously our role in the stewardship of these resources and reaffirm our commitment to conservation.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on Treaties and Tribal sovereignty: <https://nwtreatytribes.org/treaties/>

\*Still undergoing review by the Muckleshoot Tribe and Squaxin Island Tribe. A more final product should be ready for Board consideration in February of 2021.

# PROGRAM SCOPES

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Our Environmental Education program inspires meaningful connections between K-16 students and their ecosystem. We focus on reaching students who are systematically excluded from high-quality curriculum and environmental education learning opportunities. In coordination with local school districts and community partners, we implement in-person and remote learning activities that include classroom lessons, workshops, outdoor and experiential learning, and community events focused on ecological stewardship.

## HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

The Habitat Improvement program focuses on improving the riparian, floodplain, and marine nearshore habitats of Pierce County along with other rare and endangered plant communities unique to our region. We implement projects to recover native salmon/orca populations, remove invasive species, replant native trees and shrubs and restore other ecosystem processes.

## WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT & MONITORING

The Water Quality Improvement program focuses on creating an informed public around water and helping local communities meet Clean Water Act standards. We engage community volunteers in green stormwater programming and monitoring local waters; action projects like depaving, installing rain gardens, planting trees in urban spaces and along streams work to filter out pollutants and reduce stormwater runoff.

## FARM PLANNING & AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE

The Farm Planning & Agricultural Assistance program aims to build a robust local agricultural community and reduce negative impacts on soil, water, air, plants, animals and human resources. We provide technical assistance to help land users improve their stewardship practices, be economically sustainable and navigate the ever-changing economic, regulatory and ecological landscape.

## HARVEST PIERCE COUNTY

Harvest Pierce County reconnects communities to each other and to their environment by cultivating community-based food systems. With a focus on education, connection and equity, we strive to center historically underserved populations and prioritize projects that work to increase food sovereignty.

## CLIMATE RESILIENCY

The Climate Resiliency program assists Washington's farmers and rural communities in making the transition to clean, renewable energy and upgrading existing equipment and infrastructure with low cost, energy efficient technologies to both limit carbon pollution and save money and impact on natural resources

# 20-YEAR LONG-TERM GOALS

## COMMUNITIES OF ACTION

By 2040, everyone in Pierce County has equitable access to environmental education and opportunities to rebalance our communities' relationship with nature. They know how to positively affect change by effectively navigating and taking leadership in ecological, social, and civic systems.

## BALANCED ECOSYSTEMS

By 2040, Pierce County has thriving ecosystems that support native habitat for healthy populations of salmon, orca and other wildlife, native plants, and pollinators. Advancing life-giving relationships between humans and nature is the greatest challenge of our time. Pierce Conservation District works toward this balance by sustaining functioning habitats, improving the quality of fresh and salt waters and improving conditions for healthy salmon runs, making Pierce County a better place to live, work and play.

## SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

By 2040, Pierce County's farmers are part of a thriving and sustainable local agriculture community, both economically and ecologically. They are valued partners in protecting natural resources, providing healthy food to local communities, and maintaining market share for generations to come.

## HEALTHY FOOD SYSTEMS

By 2040, everyone in Pierce County has equal access to healthy food and equitable decision-making power in strengthening our local food system. Practices include redirecting food waste, building pathways for community advocacy and promoting socially and environmentally sustainable food consumption.

## CLIMATE RESILIENCE

By 2040, Pierce County communities are leading the way with increased confidence and self-determination in building resilience to the impacts of climate change. Pierce Conservation District employs the best available science and practices social equity to provide the information, resources and skills to mitigate climate change and support communities to achieve this goal.

# STRATEGIES

The most pressing environmental challenges of today are complex, ever-evolving and require a cross-systems approach to address effectively. For this reason, our plan calls for nine overarching strategies that reflect cross-systems and cross-program coordination. Although our work encompasses much more than is outlined below and is reflected in our Program Scopes, we outline the following strategies and key actions because we believe, in prioritizing and investing our limited resources in these actions over the next five years, we can make the greatest positive impact toward our Long-term Goals.

**STRATEGY 1: CREATE COMMUNITIES OF ACTION**

**STRATEGY 2: PROTECT AND RESTORE FUNCTIONING ECOSYSTEMS**

**STRATEGY 3: IMPROVE CONDITIONS FOR HEALTHY SALMON**

**STRATEGY 4: IMPROVE WATER QUALITY**

**STRATEGY 5: ADVANCE AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS**

**STRATEGY 6: PROMOTE COMMUNITY-BASED FOOD SYSTEMS**

**STRATEGY 7: ENGAGE COMMUNITY AS VALUED PARTNERS**

**STRATEGY 8: ALIGN INTERNAL OPERATIONS AND EXTERNAL PROGRAMMING WITH DISTRICT VALUES**

**STRATEGY 9: CREATE CLIMATE-RESILIENT COMMUNITIES**

## STRATEGIES & KEY ACTIONS DESCRIPTION

Taking current and projected pressures into consideration, Pierce Conservation District will employ the following strategies over the next five years to make progress toward our Long-Term Goals. With each strategy, we provide a brief rationale for prioritizing that strategy followed by a list of Key Measures the District will track to monitor progress toward achieving the desired outcomes of each strategy. For a complete list of measures we track for all our programming and operations, see Appendix C. In the table

that follows each strategy, we outline Key Actions and Sub-Actions the District will take to achieve that strategy, a corresponding timeline, and Targets to reach within the next five years.

## STRATEGY 1: CREATE COMMUNITIES OF ACTION

Education and Outreach has always been a core component of our mission and the service we provide to the community, and as such, this strategy is the backbone of achieving the goals and outcomes of every other strategy in this plan. Individuals with the knowledge, tools, confidence, and motivation to create a balanced relationship with nature are more likely to support strategic efforts related to ecological stewardship. By boosting efforts to create ecoliteracy communities in Pierce County, we not only amplify the effectiveness of our programs, but also model promising strategies for our peers. While education is an end in and of itself, our goal with this strategy is for our education efforts, both with children and adults, to have a deeper impact by giving people the support they need to turn that education into action.

We reach thousands of people each year via workshops, farm tours, virtual trainings, educational tables at public events and social media. In the past, simply reaching these people with our message was the goal, and we tallied up the numbers of people we reached, then celebrated the growth in our audience year after year. The work to build our audience and reach more people will continue, but to deepen our impact, we're creating tools and methods to follow up with the people we reach to "revolutionize engagement opportunities (volunteering, hosting workshops, event participation, etc.) to build personal ecological stewardship capacity." If for example, we reach 1,000 people with educational programming, but only 10 people implement the conservation practice we're promoting, our conversion rate is only 1% and our impact on cultivating stewardship capacity is minimal. By focusing energy on increasing our conversion rates and creating more follow up with those same 1,000 people, our efforts will lead to more on-the-ground work getting done, improving the community for all of us.

To achieve this, it's not simply a matter of following up with people more, we also need to evolve *how* we deliver our educational programming. This is why our education and outreach staff will work to "revolutionize educational opportunities (workshops, trainings, events, etc.) to incite meaningful environmental action." Giving someone the knowledge of how to implement a practice isn't the same as fostering a commitment in that person to actually implement the practice. We can't achieve the big goals that we've set for our organization and the community simply through the projects we manage, we need to mobilize as much of the community as we can to work towards those same goals.

Since 2016, we have been working to embed equity initiatives throughout our organization and in this new strategic plan, we will be focusing our equity efforts on program delivery. As we “apply an equity analysis to current educational programming and refine our educational model to reflect equity-promoting best practices,” we will be looking at where, what, how and to whom we deliver our educational programming to help ensure we’re delivering equitable programming to those most in need. Our youth programming, which focuses on in-class and field trip lessons for K-12 students, will be targeted to those with the least access to the outdoors and experiential learning, to provide opportunity to connect personally to nature and to the lessons. We will also create feedback loops with people of color led groups to continue to evolve and improve our programming.

Reaching people where they’re at with our message is an ever-changing challenge. The materials, technologies, and messages must continue to evolve to help inspire people to act to improve our natural resources and community. To continue this evolution, we will “develop a Strategic Communications Plan” to include new outreach materials for each of our core programs, new talking points for our staff, new reporting mechanism to inform the community and partners of the impact of our work and new stories to inspire positive action. These materials will also meaningfully include Traditional Ecological Knowledge to connect our messages back to the tribal land we’re on and the cultural importance of our efforts.

At the time of this writing, the COVID-19 pandemic is still devastating our community, and it has made it painfully obvious that we must adapt our programming, no matter what the circumstances. The impacts of climate change, pollution, development and other pressures on our ecosystems don’t stop when a new threat emerges, so we can’t stop our efforts either. To this end, we will “adapt our educational programming to advances in technology and community need”, and make sure that our programming can reach as many people as possible, no matter what’s going on in the world around us.

We are focused on Building Communities of Action because we believe it will take all of us to achieve the future this plan envisions. Together, and through these efforts, we believe that by 2040, everyone in Pierce County will have equitable access to environmental education and opportunities to rebalance our communities’ relationship with nature. People will know how to positively affect change by effectively navigating and taking leadership in ecological, social and civic systems.

#### **Key Measures:**

- Program participant, volunteer and workshop attendee feedback on quality, accessibility, and contribution to building personal ecological stewardship capacity

- Quality of partnership with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color-led organizations/community groups
- Ability of the District's outreach, communication, and educational materials to engage new/diverse stakeholders in District programming

Key Action	Five-Year Target(s)	Timeline	
1	<p><b>Revolutionize engagement opportunities (volunteering, hosting workshops, event participation, etc.) to build personal ecological stewardship capacity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase conversion rate of people engaged to participate in our programming to 0.5 % of participants from targeted program events/workshops (i.e. Plant Sale). First year start with select tracked events/workshops and then assess in second year for added events/workshops to track.</li> <li>● 50% of workshop attendees begin implementing conservation practice within 6 months</li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q1 2023
2	<p><b>Revolutionize educational opportunities (workshops, trainings, events, etc.) to incite meaningful environmental action</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 90% of all education programming participants display knowledge gain</li> <li>● 50% of workshop attendees begin implementing conservation practice within a year. Phase in pilot surveys for first year for all programs (use Tree Sale as an example). *Surveys will go out 1-2 times a year.</li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q4 2025
a	<p><b>Develop a participatory model for our educational programs that incorporates the three elements of teaching/showing/questioning. Ongoing education throughout event.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Facilitated discussion amongst staff who lead education programs to identify how increase in knowledge can be achieved.</li> <li>● Create District model for participatory workshops.</li> </ul>	Q1 2023 - Q1 2024

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assessment of current education programming and where teaching/showing/questioning is involved or to be added.</li> <li>● Providing follow up literature or other educational materials for review after program has ended for select or targeted workshops/events.</li> </ul>	
b	Integrate pre and post survey process into workshop, training, or education series to assess knowledge gain and behavior change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Standardized surveys for program workshops, trainings or education series.</li> <li>● All programs assess and review surveys. Separate survey templates for AmeriCorps (Forms) and program staff (Surveys).</li> <li>● 90% of all education programming participants display knowledge gain</li> <li>● 50% of workshop attendees begin implementing conservation practice within a year. *Note surveys will be sent 1-2 times a year.</li> </ul>	Q2 2021 - Q4 2021
c	Create high school leadership program that bridges school learning and PCD volunteer opportunities, career pathways, and higher education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● PCD/Student co-design process completed to create leadership program that bridges school learning and PCD volunteer opportunities, career pathways, and higher education.</li> <li>● School counselors, high school educators, and partner organizational leaders from prioritized EE areas equipped with information they need to refer students to future opportunities in ecological stewardship.</li> </ul>	Q3 2022 - Q4 2025

d	Make connections between soil science, food systems, climate change, etc. explicit in our curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate education is incorporated within all other education lessons and units</li> <li>• Expand number of school garden programs to 10</li> <li>• Increase the proportion of school programs that focus on soil/food to 60% of programming and 35% of contact hours</li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q4 2025
3	<b>Apply equity analysis to current educational programming and refine educational model to reflect equity-promoting best practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Equity assessment conducted on existing PCD educational programming using equity indicators/dashboard; increase in workshop, training, etc. participant satisfaction</b></li> </ul>	Q1 2022 - Q4 2022
a	Conduct prioritization process to focus EE Program delivery on students of color, low income students and youth most likely to not have access to experiential learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop prioritization of EE program delivery with guidance from GIS consultant.</li> <li>• Begin program development to implement within 2 years (2023-2024)</li> </ul>	Q1 2022 - Q4 2022
b	Identify gaps in who and where we serve, and reach out to more diverse groups for classes/workshops. Obtain feedback from POC groups on how to hold classes/workshops and create welcoming spaces both online and in person.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify potential people of color led organization(s) partners with help of Equity Team.</li> <li>• Begin process of partnering for workshops.</li> <li>• Each program team identifies and works with a POC partner for a workshop within 2 years (2023-2024).</li> <li>• Educational program delivery is representative of Pierce County demographics</li> </ul>	Q1 2022 - Q4 2022
4	<b>Develop a Strategic Communications Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Plan is finished by 2022 and integrates social media, video, print, and outreach strategies to maximize impact with our messaging.</b></li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q4 2022

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase conversion rate of people engaged to people that participate in our programming by .5%</li> </ul>	
a	Develop new outreach materials for each program that incite action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● New outreach materials for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ PCD (Standardized PowerPoint Template for PCD, new brochure)</li> <li>○ Green Stormwater Infrastructure Program</li> <li>○ Habitat Stewards</li> <li>○ Stream Team</li> <li>○ Farm Team</li> <li>○ Climate Change</li> <li>○ Prioritizations</li> <li>○ Equity Journey storytelling</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q4 2022
b	Develop standard talking points for each program to introduce the audience to PCD at workshops, trainings, and educational series. Make these talking points meaningfully include Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and acknowledge that we're on tribal land, and relevant climate change language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Standard PCD script created and implemented within all program workshops, trainings, and series.</li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q4 2021
c	Develop Jurisdictional Report templates and begin delivering reports to partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create template for Jurisdictional Reports within first year</li> <li>● Deliver reports to jurisdictional partners in second year</li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q4 2022

d	Highlight examples of successful conservation efforts in order to inspire other positive action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create 5-7 promotional productions (e.g. videos) on high priority projects with one production per year after establishment in Q4 2023.</li> <li>• Utilize outreach tools such as media development; story maps; video production; Tahoma View; and Conservation Celebrations</li> </ul>	One major project per year
e	Work with PCD Board of Supervisors to develop outreach packets to support their efforts as ambassadors for the organization		Q3 2021 - Q2 2022
5	<b>Adapt educational programming to advances in technology and community need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>90% of program staff are proficient in applying use of digital platforms</b></li> <li>• <b>80% of participants report the digital platforms as effective</b></li> <li>• <b>Develop and deliver 2 needed Educational Series</b></li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q1 2025
a	Increase District capacity to provide all in-person education via distance learning programs (virtual and offline).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All programs provide distance education programming in addition to in-person programming</li> <li>• 70% of all education programming participants display knowledge gain</li> <li>• 25% of distance learning program participants begin implementing conservation practice within a year. *Note surveys will be sent 1-2 times/year.</li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q1 2023
b	Identify and fill gaps in our Educational Series (For example -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of gaps identified through stakeholder feedback loops are filled within 12 months</li> </ul>	Q1 2022 - Q4 2025

creating a native plant education series that leads up to the native plant sale.)		
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## STRATEGY 2: PROTECT AND RESTORE FUNCTIONING ECOSYSTEMS

Pierce County, along with the rest of Puget Sound, is changing rapidly. We've doubled in population in the last 40 years and are likely to double again in the next forty. As our region has grown, many of the things we love most about this area - the rivers, forests, salmon, and orca - have been degraded or even destroyed. If the place we call home is going to remain a healthy, vibrant place that we all love, we must take it upon ourselves to protect the best of what we have left and restore the areas that desperately need our stewardship. Functioning ecosystems are complex, holistic systems, which interconnect to support healthy habitats, soils, air, and water. By working to protect and restore them, we not only benefit the plants and animals that also call this place home, we create a healthier home for all of us.

Because of this holistic complexity, our work to create healthy, functioning ecosystems must incorporate a systems-based approach, working to restore urban and rural habitats, from upland forests to our marine shorelines. While much of this work entails deepening our impact with existing programs, this plan also calls for some new programming. Starting with forests, we will "work with partners to develop and fund a forestry program to provide technical assistance to rural small forest landowners." Long a service gap in Pierce County, developing this program will allow us to work with property owners to improve local forested lands to make them more resilient to wildfire, to install best management practices that help improve water quality, and increase habitat for fish and wildlife.

As we move further down the watershed, our core programming will continue to focus on freshwater riparian habitats that are vital to the recovery of Endangered Species Act listed salmonids, which we highlight in Strategy 3. For other rare and endangered plant communities unique to our region, which we haven't traditionally had the resources to work in, such as our local Prairie Oak Woodland, we will explore the feasibility of supporting additional restoration programs and continue to use our Green Partnership Fund grants program to support partners to address these and other priority habitats.

In rural and urban settings alike, we will take a critical look at our technical assistance programming to identify and fill gaps, targeting stakeholders such as developers, real estate agents, and partners that focus on land use planning and permitting. Together, these key actions will help us change development behaviors and reduce harm to the ecosystem *before* it occurs. Coupled with efforts to increase the scale and pace of our restoration projects, such as bringing our City for Credits program to

scale across the county, we will begin to see genuine improvement in our local ecosystems. As a carbon sequestration program, City Forest Credits is also a key component of our Climate Resiliency work captured in Strategy 9.

As we move into the urban setting, we will work to develop and launch a Habitat at Home program that will focus on helping residential landowners create more habitat for pollinators, birds, and other wildlife. Combined with our Green Stormwater Infrastructure work outlined in Strategy 4, this programming will bring co-benefits of improved water quality and increased urban tree canopy which reduces the negative health impacts of heat island effect and poor air quality.

Finally, along the marine shoreline, we will continue to build out our new Shore Friendly Pierce program, working with shoreline landowners to improve habitat and increase climate resiliency. We will use geographic information systems to target the highest priority parcels for outreach and technical assistance, creating a project pipeline that will deliver beneficial outcomes for years to come. In the next 5-years, we will complete our first major marine shoreline restoration project and stand it up as an example of what other marine shoreline landowners can do to help make our overall ecosystem better.

Collectively, these key actions will help us focus more on the whole ecosystem and will prioritize our work on areas and actions that will have the biggest impact. Taking this strategic approach will move us closer to our long-term goal: by 2040, Pierce County has thriving ecosystems that support native habitat for healthy populations of salmon, orca and other wildlife, native plants, and pollinators. Advancing life-giving relationships between humans and nature is the greatest challenge of our time. Pierce Conservation District works toward this balance by sustaining functioning habitats, improving the quality of fresh and salt waters and improving conditions for healthy salmon runs, making Pierce County a better place to live, work and play.

#### **Key Measures:**

- Geographic area (stream miles, acres) of priority habitat restored
- Change in program participant composition to reflect more diverse demographics of Pierce County
- Number of land users implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs)

	Key Action	Five-Year Target(s)	Timeline
1	Bring City Forest Credits program to scale across Pierce County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• X lbs. of carbon sequestered by 2025 (need to use this fall's plantings as baseline for estimate)</li> </ul>	Q2 2021 - Q4 2023
2	Improve Residential Habitat Through a Habitat At Home Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 150 number of land users implementing BMPs</li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q2 2023
a	Build out a pollinator outreach program to include recommendations of practices for landowners to implement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pollinator program deployed</li> <li>• 5,000 pollinator plants installed</li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q1 2023
b	Align with new state pollinator task force work lead by WSDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pollinator habitat projects implemented on 5 farms.</li> </ul>	Q1 2022 - Q4 2025
c	Develop and launch Habitat at Home Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 200 BMPs installed</li> </ul>	
d	Explore feasibility of supporting a Prairie Oak Woodland restoration program		
3	Target key stakeholders to change development behaviors and reduce harm to ecosystems/habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90% of all education programming participants display knowledge gain</li> <li>• 50% of workshop attendees begin implementing conservation practice within 6 months</li> <li>• Programs and services delivery are representative of Pierce County demographics</li> </ul>	Q1 2022 - Q1 2023

a	Identify gaps in workshop programming, i.e. developers, real estate agents, land use planners & permitters and landowners		Q1 2022 - Q1 2023
b	Interface with planning/permitting agencies so that low-impact development alternatives are provided and landowners are directed to PCD programming		Q1 2022 - Q3 2022
4	<b>In coordination with partners, develop and fund a forestry program to provide technical assistance to rural small forest landowners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish the program</li> <li>Adaptively manage targets for implementation once program is established</li> </ul>	Q3 2021 - Q3 2022
5	<b>Broadcast the Green Partnership Fund to partners addressing priority habitats outside of the District's current scope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater diversity of Pierce County habitat types are improved</li> <li>Partners feel supported and priority habitats are restored</li> </ul>	Q3 2021 - Q4 2021
6	<b>Use GIS prioritization of marine shorelines to target high priority parcels for outreach, technical assistance, and shoreline restoration.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Map of marine shoreline parcels ranked according to priority criteria.</li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q4 2025
a	Conduct landowner outreach according to prioritization and create	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4-5 armor removal projects in development (i.e. the various stages of</li> </ul>	Q2 2021 - Q4 2021

	a project development pipeline	feasibility/design/permitting/funding)	
b	Complete a demonstration marine shoreline restoration project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a demonstration marine shoreline restoration project</li> <li>• Up to 580 linear feet of hard armoring removed</li> </ul>	Q4 2025
c	Explore feasibility and funding for field survey of shoreline armor condition in Pierce County to generate GIS dataset.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a field survey of shoreline armor condition</li> </ul>	Q1-2022 - Q3 2023

## STRATEGY 3: IMPROVE CONDITIONS FOR HEALTHY SALMON

Since time immemorial, salmon have been the lifeblood of this region, whether as a vital food source, cultural icon or economic driver. Today though, many of our most important salmon species are critically endangered and we risk losing them for good if we don't act to restore riparian conditions. Chinook salmon are also the primary food source of another critically endangered Pacific Northwest icon, Southern Resident Orca Whales. Salmon are an important indicator of the health of biological conditions for aquatic life throughout Puget Sound. By working to restore them, we'll ensure that future generations get to experience the same richness and diversity of life that Puget Sound has always provided the people that call this place home.

This is a challenge much larger than any one organization, but in concert with dozens of local partners the key actions we've mapped out in this strategy will help us get deeper into our local impact and meaningfully advance toward our long-term goal: "by 2040, Pierce County has thriving ecosystems that support native habitat for healthy populations of salmon, orca and other wildlife, native plants and pollinators."

To focus our limited resources and staff time, our first key action is to "Conduct an analysis to prioritize stream reaches for salmon recovery efforts and implement." This action isn't intended to recreate the wheel, as our local Salmon Recovery Lead Entities have developed restoration strategies, but rather to take the data from those strategies, layer it with information specific to the areas and people we work in and with, and help strategically target our efforts. We can't do everything, everywhere, so we need to wisely target our use of limited resources.

This prioritization process will drive the next two key actions forward by directing where we deploy our resources. "Increase capacity to deliver riparian restoration Technical Assistance and implementation of practices to non-farm riparian landowners" helps us leverage our existing on-Farm technical assistance and reach more landowners in these targeted areas. This increase in technical assistance will allow us to "Work with landowners to implement salmon-specific best management practices (BMPs) and create a project development pipeline" of both small projects and large floodplain reconnection projects. Combined, these actions are aimed at increasing the scale, impact and pace of our salmon habitat restoration work.

In our on-Farm work, we plan to continue to work with landowners to implement BMPs that improve soil health and productivity, water quality and riparian habitat. However, our partnership with 20+ organizations in the Floodplains for the Future initiative has pointed toward the need to “Develop a salmon barrier inventory and removal initiative” that focuses on barriers that block upstream salmon migration, specifically on farms. These barriers often also cause drainage issues for farmers, preventing them from being able to plant their fields early in the spring. We see this key action as a win-win for both salmon and farmers, while tying into broader efforts by Pierce County and the State Department of Transportation to remove barriers on public roads.

Although each of these efforts will increase our impact, we also recognize that there are significant cultural reasons our region has not made progress on salmon recovery efforts. Chinook salmon have been listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act since 1999 and despite 20+ years of statewide work to restore habitat, salmon are not recovering. To truly achieve our long-term goals, it will require more than just restoring habitat, it will require changing the way each of us see ourselves in connection to salmon and our local ecosystems. In alignment with our equity goals, we will work to shift this cultural relationship with a “planning and engagement strategy motivated by a shift in the salmon recovery narrative to include food sovereignty and cultural relevance,” specifically focusing on developing closer relationships with our local tribal communities. We have a lot to learn from tribal partners’ Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and embedding those lessons into our strategies for action, and sharing that knowledge more broadly, we can shift the broader cultural relationship with our local ecosystem. Combined with our more traditional habitat recovery work, this will put us on a stronger path towards recovery.

Advancing life-giving relationships between humans and nature is the greatest challenge of our time. This strategy helps Pierce Conservation District work toward this balance by sustaining functioning habitats, improving the quality of fresh and salt waters and improving conditions for healthy salmon runs, making Pierce County a better place to live, work and play.

**Key Measures:**

- Return on investment in additional salmon recovery partnerships, projects and educational opportunities
- Cultural relevance of our engagement and communications around salmon recovery

Key Action	Five-Year Target(s)	Timeline
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1	Conduct an analysis to prioritize stream reaches for salmon recovery efforts and implement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a GIS prioritization project for the Habitat team, with an emphasis on salmon recovery.</li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q3 2021
a	Conduct outreach process with Salmon Recovery Lead Entities, Tribal Partners, and other key partners to inform prioritization		Q2 2021 - Q3 2021
2	Increase capacity to deliver riparian restoration Technical Assistance and implementation of practices to non-farm riparian landowners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver new non-farm Riparian Restoration Program</li> <li>• 4 - 6 small (5-10 acres) riparian restoration projects annually</li> <li>• X number of stream miles restored</li> </ul>	Q2 2021 - Q4 2021
a	Develop a landowner outreach and assistance program modeled after Shore Friendly/Farm Team to restore and improve high priority riparian areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and develop financial assistance mechanisms.</li> <li>• Develop cost share policy.</li> <li>• Develop scope of this effort; prioritize areas for outreach and engagement.</li> </ul>	Q1 2025 - Q4 2025
b	Incorporate invasive weed control into restoration projects and BMP recommendations; explore partner and funding opportunities for system-wide knotweed control in high priority watersheds.		Q4 2023
3	Work with landowners to implement salmon-specific BMPs and create a project development pipeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 major projects in development (i.e. the various stages of feasibility/design/permitting/funding)</li> </ul>	
a	Complete a floodplain and instream salmon recovery project on South Prairie Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restore 40 acres of floodplain</li> </ul>	Q4 2025

4	Planning and engagement strategy motivated by a shift in the salmon recovery narrative to include food sovereignty and cultural relevance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure funding to commence process.</li> <li>Convene focus groups.</li> <li>Deliverable = road map plan with next steps.</li> <li>1-2 collaborative events/projects with tribal fisheries groups.</li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q2 2023
a	Engage tribal communities in focus groups to assess Traditional Ecological Knowledge and strategies for action.		
5	Develop a salmon barrier inventory and removal initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>X # of projects in development (i.e. the various stages of feasibility/design/permitting/funding)</li> <li>X # of barriers removed</li> </ul>	
a	Develop a variable width buffer pilot program based on effective programs in King and Whatcom Counties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>X # stream miles restored (to be adaptively managed when FbD 4 barrier inventory is complete - late 2021)</li> </ul>	

## STRATEGY 4: IMPROVE WATER QUALITY

Pierce County gets over 40 inches of rain every year and in places where we have functioning ecosystems, much of the rain naturally infiltrates back into the ground. In our cities, towns, and even our own backyards, the rain hits the hard surfaces of our homes, businesses, and roads and runs directly into our local streams, rivers, lakes and Puget Sound, carrying millions of tons of pollution with it. As a result, many of our local water bodies do not meet state standards for water quality, impacting all the life within them and our own ability to safely enjoy recreation. However, we can all act to reduce these impacts and improve local water quality to create a healthier ecosystem and a healthier community.

Like all of our work, improving water quality requires a holistic approach that strives to address problems across the whole system. Pierce CD alone is not capable of dealing with the complexity of issues that have led to poor water quality, but we work with partners across the county to implement solutions to these challenges. The niche within this greater system that we fill is working

with residential landowners and farmers to implement practices at individual homes and farms that help reduce stormwater pollution and improve local water quality in a measurable way. This strategy reflects key actions that our Water Quality Improvement Program and our Farm Assistance Program will be taking to deepen our impact in the next 5-years in the urban and rural spaces respectively.

To focus and prioritize our work in the urban setting, our Water Quality team conducted a science and community engagement-driven prioritization process in 2019 that identified four key subbasins to target our work. Beginning in 2021, we will “design & deploy a Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) program with a community organizing model” that will “establish a GSI program within these prioritized basins.” This programming will center the design of stormwater projects on community needs, develop a Natural Yard Care program, and establish financial assistance programs to support landowners implementing practices. This program will lead to 5 million gallons of stormwater infiltrated back into the ground annually within 5-years, dramatically reducing stormwater pollution while also significantly increasing urban tree canopy, a key climate resiliency action. This program will also align with our goals around food access, emphasizing opportunities such as Lawns to Lettuce, and Depave to Community Gardens and/or Urban Farms.

In our more traditional work with farms and farmers, we’ll continue to implement practices that reduce stormwater pollution from things like livestock manure or soil runoff. To deepen the impact of this work however, we will adapt our outreach methods and deploy some new initiatives with partners that can lead to better overall management of these non-point sources of pollution. In particular, our work on the Key Peninsula targets actions that can improve Shellfish beds, and here we will “increase the conversion rate of adult attendees through outreach efforts, workshops and educational events to implement practices that will lead to recovery of Shellfish areas.” While we’ve long worked with landowners to better manage livestock manure, many of these farms produce too much compost to redistribute on their own pastures. Meanwhile, urban gardeners or row crop farms don’t have enough compost to help fertilize their gardens or fields. To address this issue and reduce pollution, we will “work with partners to incubate a manure and compost distribution business.”

Finally, to know how we’re doing and to maintain the improvements we implement, we need to continue to expand the reach, diversity, and engagement of our monitoring and stewardship programs: Stream Team and Habitat Stewards. To this end, and to also meet our equity goals, we will “focus the development of Stream Team and Habitat Stewards programs to engage with

broader and more diverse community members.” This focused development will help us increase volunteer capacity to deliver these programs at larger scale, resulting in broader understanding of our water quality improvement efforts and better long-term care of our restoration investments.

Together, these key actions and the work we'll be doing with the community and partner organizations, will help us achieve multiple long-term goals, including our 2040 goals on Communities of Action, Balanced Ecosystems, and Sustainable Agriculture. Clean water is vital for all of us and for maintaining the biological diversity and health of Pierce County. It will take all of us working together to clean up impaired streams, rivers, lakes, and Puget Sound, but by combining meaningful community engagement with science-based solutions, our local water quality will improve.

#### **Key Measures:**

- Community sense of ownership in process of developing local Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) program
- Vitality of local waters, indicated by health of shellfish populations, pollution levels, etc.
- Effectiveness of depave, tree planting, rain garden installation, and animal waste management projects

	<b>Key Action</b>	<b>Five-Year Target(s)</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
1	<b>Design &amp; deploy Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) program with a community organizing model</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● GSI program is designed and deployed with community needs fully integrated</li></ul>	Q1 2021 - Q4 2021
a	Hire and onboard GSI Program Manager		
b	Receive community feedback on prioritization of subbasins		

c	Develop and launch a Natural Yard Care (NYC) program to bundle GSI Best Management Practice (BMP) offerings to the public, including a potential Lawns to Lettuce initiative		
d	Incorporate edible landscaping into GSI programming for greater food access and awareness		
2	<b>Establish GSI program within prioritized basins</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 5,000,000 gallons of stormwater infiltrated</li> <li>● 100 GSI projects implemented</li> <li>● 14-acre increase in Urban Tree Canopy</li> </ul>	Q1 2022 - Q4 2022
a	Center design of GSI projects in the community's needs		
b	Establish GSI financial assistance program		
c	Establish a workshop series focused on the developed community (commercial, faith communities, institutional) on integrating GSI into redevelopment		
d	Increase amount of urban tree canopy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 14 acre increase in urban tree canopy</li> </ul>	
e	Depave to Urban Farm		
3	<b>Increase conversion rate of adult attendees through outreach efforts, workshops and educational events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 90% of all education programming participants display knowledge gain</li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q1 2023

	to implement practices that will lead to recovery of Shellfish areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50% of workshop attendees begin implementing conservation practice within 6 months</li> <li>• Increase conversion rate (# of attendees/BMPs installed) by .5%</li> </ul>	
a	Focus of workshops and implementation recommendations will focus on: manure management and bacteria reductions, and interception of rain, infiltration of rainwater/stormwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 200 of acres of Shellfish areas opened for commercial and/or recreational harvest</li> <li>• 400,000 gallons per year diverted.</li> </ul>	
4	<b>Work with partners to incubate a manure and compost distribution business.</b>		<b>Q3 2021 - Q4 2025</b>
a	Collection and management of animal waste		
5	<b>Focus development of Stream Team and Habitat Stewards programs to engage with broader and more diverse community members</b>		
6	<b>Increase volunteer capacity to deliver Habitat Stewardship program at larger scale</b>		
a	Fine tune development of the community peer mentorship approach for Stream Team Chinook Program		
b	Stream cleanup event(s)		



## STRATEGY 5: ADVANCE AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS

Locally produced food is essential to the health, security and economy of our community. However, the same rapid growth that has impacted our ecosystems, salmon and water quality has also resulted in the loss of over 70% of Pierce County's farmland since 1950. Today we're losing roughly 1,000 acres of valuable farmland each year and with it, some of the most productive soils in the country. By working to preserve farmland and helping agricultural producers manage their farms in an ecologically sustainable way, we also help increase the productivity of their soils, providing a multi-benefit approach that improves both the local economy and local ecosystems.

For over 70-years, we have worked with farmers to help improve soil health and keep farming an integral part of our local food system, economy and culture, a core part of our mission that we remain dedicated to. In addition to development pressures, farmers also face challenges with drainage in the spring, when too much rain floods their fields and prevents them from planting their crops; increasing drought in the fall when not enough rain is forcing them to irrigate more; and major infrastructure challenges that impacts distribution and therefore local food access for consumers.

The challenges facing farmers and agricultural lands are complex and intertwined. Those same challenges present opportunities though, not just to make farming more viable for our community, but to implement multi-benefit approaches that can also help address climate change, flood risk and salmon habitat restoration. We'll develop a holistic approach by "collaborat(ing) with partners to development and implement a strategic plan for Pierce County agriculture". This plan will identify infrastructure needs as well as conservation needs and we will work with partners to support efforts outside of our scope, while addressing issues that fall within our purview, such as "evaluat(ing) community needs for shared farm equipment" and helping create a tool library to reduce the capital costs for local farmers.

While not the sole cause of the challenges facing local agriculture, the local impacts of climate change are rapidly exacerbating issues such as drainage and drought. To improve soil health and water storage capacity, while mitigating the broader impacts of climate change, we will "develop the District's best practices for implementing carbon storage and other climate adaptation measures on farms and apply those practices throughout Pierce County." These efforts include, "bringing our cover crop and direct seeding programs to scale across Pierce County," which help reduce stormwater runoff during the winter months, improving

local water quality, and by building organic matter back into the soil, both store carbon and improve drainage. We will also “develop and implement an irrigation efficiency program,” which will help farmers reduce costs associated with irrigation, while also helping keep water in the streams in fall when salmon are returning.

Coupled with our ongoing efforts, the key actions we’ve identified in our plan will help us keep agriculture viable in Pierce County, yet all of these efforts are for naught if there’s no one to farm the land. The average age of a farmer in Pierce County is nearly 60-years old, and so we must also focus our efforts on helping the next generation of farmers be successful. In these efforts we will, “further develop a Farm Incubator program to train the next generation of farmers and give them the skills, resources, and connections they need to be successful; and “continue to develop the Latino Farmer Outreach Program so that the Latino agriculture community trusts and looks to PCD for assistance and resources.” Working with partners to give these new farmers access to land, business training to be successful, and training in ecologically friendly practices will help ensure farming continues to play a vital role in the health and well-being of our community long into the future.

The work is never done though, and towards the end of this 5-year plan, we will renew our prioritized efforts and evaluate our progress, starting with a “reassessment of the 9-priority sub-basins to determine impacts and future focus areas.” Taken collectively, these key actions will help us Advance Agricultural Systems, leading to outcomes that get us closer to our goal: “by 2040, Pierce County’s farmers are part of a thriving and sustainable local agriculture community, both economically and ecologically. They are valued partners in protecting natural resources, providing healthy food to local communities, and maintaining market share for generations to come.”

#### **Key Measures:**

- Geographic area (priority sub-watersheds) of land user outreach, education, planning and conservation implementation
- Number of land users implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs)
- Health of the local agricultural economy - number of farmers in business, land in farming, economic viability

	Key Action	Five-Year Target(s)	Timeline
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1	Collaborate with partners to develop and implement a strategic plan for Pierce County agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic plan for Pierce County agriculture is developed</li> </ul>	Q1 2022 - Q4 2025
a	Continue to collaborate with partners on the Drainage Task Force to develop priority actions to improve county-wide drainage management systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drainage improvement projects are implemented and farm land is improved.</li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q4 2025
2	Bring our cover crop and direct seeding programs to scale across Pierce County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>500 acres implementing practice (crop and pasture)</li> <li>Practices evaluated for participation in state-level carbon sequestration efforts and programs</li> <li>Sequester X tons of carbon (target to be adaptively managed once tool to measure is active per Strategy 9.2)</li> </ul>	Q1 2021-Q4 2025
a	Partner with WSU Puyallup Research Extension to run additional research trials on cover crop methods and varietals to identify most effective methods for local farm conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farm trials conducted</li> <li>Best practices for local implementation is determined</li> </ul>	Q1 2022-Q4 2025
3	Develop District's best practices for implementing carbon storage and other climate adaptation measures on farms and apply practices throughout Pierce County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sequester X tons of carbon (target to be adaptively managed once tool to measure is active per Strategy 9.3)</li> </ul>	Q1 2022 - Q4 2025

a	Integrate Sustainable Farms and Fields initiatives into cover crop work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soil health related parameters are included in soil testing</li> <li>• 10 farms are engaged with soil health testing</li> </ul>	Q1 2024- Q4 2025
b	Explore feasibility of a scalable Biochar project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on feasibility - begin planning if applicable</li> </ul>	Q1 2024- Q4 2025
4	<b>Evaluate community need for shared farm equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 500 people engaged per assessment</li> <li>• Purchase necessary equipment</li> <li>• Annual Survey</li> </ul>	<b>Q1 2021 - Q4 2021</b>
a	Increase PCD's equipment/tool library and/or assist community group in organizing in order to purchase equipment/tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ag COI focus group</li> <li>• 2 additional workshops</li> </ul>	Q1 2022 - Q4 2022
b	Improve availability of farm equipment to the community in order to improve productivity, increase economic viability, and increase best practice implementation on their operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure equipment rental program is accessible to non-English speakers and other marginalized communities</li> </ul>	Q1 2024-Q4 2025
5	<b>Develop and implement an irrigation efficiency program.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 landowners have received irrigation efficiency analysis.</li> <li>• 5 irrigation water management plans developed with BMPs implemented.</li> </ul>	<b>Q1 2023-Q4 2025</b>
a	Work with AgWeatherNet to install 2 tier 2 stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure funding and install 2 stations</li> </ul>	Q1 2023-Q4 2025

6	Continue to develop the Latino Farmer Outreach Program so that the Latino agriculture community trusts and looks to PCD for assistance and resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 Latino owned farms on implement BMPs</li> <li>• 1 - 2 workshops annually</li> <li>• 6 Spanish BMP videos</li> </ul>	Q1 2023- Q2 2025
a	Perform needs assessment of Latino farm community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs assessment performed in order to inform suite of services and educational materials and events</li> <li>• 2 surveys conducted and 40 surveys returned</li> </ul>	Q1 2023- Q2 2025
7	Further develop a Farm Incubator program to train the next generation of farmers and give them the skills, resources, and/or connections they need to be successful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incubate 6 new farm businesses</li> </ul>	Q1 2022- Q4 2023
a	Provide on farm education program to recruit and train a diverse future generation of farmers		Q1 2021- Q4 2025
b	Farm education program is integrated and recognized within the Pierce County Ag Community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80 graduates of Farm Foundations</li> <li>• 15% of graduates are POC</li> </ul>	Q1 2023-Q4 2024
8	Reassess the 9-priority sub-basins to determine impacts and future focus areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete prioritization</li> <li>• Metrics and targets are dependent on identified resource concern</li> <li>• Targets are to get resource concern within</li> </ul>	Q1 2024 - Q4 2024

		<b>standard</b>	
a	Identify priority resource concern in each priority sub-basin		
b	Adapt technical and financial assistance programs to target work accordingly		Q1 2025 - Q4 2025

## STRATEGY 6: PROMOTE COMMUNITY-BASED FOOD SYSTEMS

Many people in our community do not have access to the fresh food necessary for good health. We are as disconnected from farming and food growing as we are from nature, and the challenges these twin disconnections create for our community are intertwined. A community food system is not only about the ability to grow food - it's about growing people's understanding and engagement in the system so that growers have diverse channels for distribution and consumers have access to abundant, healthy food. The food system we are working to create is equitable, resilient, and economically sustainable. It connects people back to the land and to food so that they can create health for themselves and their families, and reaffirms the relationship that people have historically had with food, nature, and community.

The work we do to help create a community-based food system is centered in equity and relationships with the communities we work with. Though this strategy is primarily the focal point of our Harvest Pierce County program, it also integrates our broader work in the rural farm food system as well as our Environmental Education program, to help bring resources to local youth. To deepen the impact of this work over the next 5-years, we will be "evolving (our) programming to address ongoing community needs, especially with black, indigenous, and people of color communities".

This evolution will integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge as equally important to our understanding of priorities as more commonly used data such as food access and equity data. With these diverse systems of knowing intertwined, we will "conduct a prioritization process using food access, equity data layers, and community feedback to identify gaps in service area and adapt program delivery accordingly." Our priorities in this evolution will be to give more communities access to land to grow food, to fully integrate traditional/medicinal/ecological benefits of plants into our programming, and create a healthier "urban orchard" through training and education to make our gleaning program more robust.

A community-based food system also requires farmers and food entrepreneurs to create sustainable food businesses. To continue the evolution of our Farm Foundations training program, we will "develop an Urban Farmer pilot program that centers equity to create access to land and entrepreneurial opportunities", working with land-owning public agencies to provide this land-access. Along with training and access to land, the next generation of farmers will also need robust distribution channels for the food they

grow, so we will “work with partners to create more diverse distribution channels for urban and rural farmers for more resilience in sales”, such as new healthy corner stores and a new centralized food hub.

Creating a healthy, community-based food system is not a 5-year effort - it's a generational effort. While we focus our efforts on adult training and access, we can't lose sight of generations to come. To bring more awareness and opportunity to our youth, our Environmental Education program will “provide hands-on and online resources to support garden programming for youth to promote community grown food.” Collectively, the key actions in this strategy will help us strengthen the community food system over the next 5-years, while also putting on a firm foundation to achieve our long-term goal: “By 2040, everyone in Pierce County has equal access to healthy food and equitable decision-making power in strengthening our local food system. Practices include redirecting food waste, building pathways for community advocacy, and promoting socially and environmentally sustainable food consumption.”

#### **Key Measures:**

- Program participant feedback on program delivery, knowledge gain, and equitable opportunity
- Return on investment in expanding to serve and partner with BIPOC and high-need communities
- Change in food security for high-need communities as a result of program participation/expansion

	Key Action	Five-Year Target(s)	Timeline
1	Conduct a prioritization process using food access, equity data layers, and community feedback to identify gaps in service area and adapt program delivery accordingly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Service gaps are addressed</li><li>● Diversity of program participants matches the demographic diversity of Pierce County</li></ul>	Q1 2023 - Q4 2023
a	Prioritize cultural groups access to spaces for growing/accessing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Diversity of program participants matches the demographic diversity of Pierce County</li></ul>	this was moved below

	traditional/culturally appropriate foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● X% of projects are managed by/supporting marginalized groups (need to establish baseline data to determine target in 2021)</li> </ul>	
b	Have Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) equally and meaningfully included in how we strategize and measure progress		Q4 2021 (and in an iterative way each Q4)
c	Have a regular review of community-collected and community-owned data to truly listen and act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop a method of capturing knowledge shared laterally within spaces/classes/events - community members sharing with each other - supporting community leadership, including community feedback</li> </ul>	Q4 2021 (and in an iterative way each Q4)
2	<b>Evolve HPC's programming to address ongoing community needs especially of BIPOC communities</b>		<b>Q4 2021 (and in an iterative way each Q4)</b>
a	Strengthen community garden program so more communities have access to land to grow food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 20% increase in number of gardens</li> <li>● Locations of new gardens are related to demographics for race, income, and food access to serve those most in need</li> <li>● Establish baseline data about our community gardeners</li> </ul>	Q3 2023-Q4 2024
b	Fully encompass the traditional/medicinal/ecological benefits of plants to expand the number of ways (and number of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop a method of capturing knowledge shared laterally within spaces/classes/events - community members sharing with each other - supporting community leadership, including</li> </ul>	Q4 2022

	people) that are connected to the environment through plants	community feedback	
c	Develop an education program around full circle gardening (include pollinators)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 90% of workshop attendees rank it effective</li> <li>● 50% are motivated to implement practice</li> <li>● Barriers gets integrated into adaptive management</li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q4 2023
d	Address and improve fruit tree quality within Pierce County so that gleaning program can capture food waste to redirect it to food banks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recruitment of 12-15 branch leaders annually</li> <li>● 25% growth in harvested gleaning sites</li> </ul>	Q1 2023-Q4 2025
e	Support and expand Orchard Club, a training program for building skills in the community related to fruit tree care to improve health of urban orchard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 25% growth in harvested gleaning sites (baseline will be established by 2021 data)</li> <li>● 12 participants move onto volunteer or contractor positions</li> </ul>	Q1 2021-Q4 2023
3	<b>Develop an Urban Farmer pilot program that centers equity to create access to land and entrepreneurial opportunities.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Build 5 sites by 2023</b></li> </ul>	Q1 2021-Q4 2021
a	Develop partnerships with additional land holding public agencies to gain access to land for farming through public agency partnership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 8 projects in development (i.e. the various stages of feasibility/design/permitting/funding)</li> </ul>	Q1 2022-Q4 2025
4	<b>Provide hands-on and online resources to support garden</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>20% growth in active gardens</b></li> <li>● <b>90% of all education programming participants</b></li> </ul>	

	programming for youth to promote community grown food	display knowledge gain	
5	Work with partners to create more diverse distribution channels for urban and rural farmers for more resilience in sales (i.e. healthy corner store, food hub, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop 3 new distribution channels</li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q4 2025

## STRATEGY 7: ENGAGE COMMUNITY AS VALUED PARTNERS

The challenges our community faces are greater than any one organization can take on alone, so Pierce Conservation District works closely with community partners across all of our programs and services. Being of and for this community, we strive for open public input that can shape and help us adaptively manage our program delivery. We want to see everyone in Pierce County engaged in making this community better, so we aim to position ourselves as a convener of diverse stakeholder groups who together can have a far greater collective impact.

We don't do any of our work alone. Across all of our core programming, we work closely with volunteers, nonprofit and public agency partners, watershed councils, and community groups. This approach is not only central to our identity, it's fundamental to our Mission "to equitably support community-driven solutions to our most pressing local environmental challenges." It's through mutual partnership with other actors in our system that we'll achieve our long-term Vision of "a Pierce County with thriving ecosystems and resilient communities."

To achieve those outcomes, the key actions we'll take under this strategy start with "conducting collaborative community engagement efforts with our partners and community members to create a feedback loop to adaptively manage our program delivery to address the needs of the community." These efforts will: include developing a system to make this feedback actionable; include continued training for staff to ensure that the engagement is authentic; and address the needs of both new communities of focus as well as our more traditional focus on the needs of the farming community.

To align our Strategic Plan and program delivery with our equity goals, we will "prioritize relationship building in underrepresented communities to build trust" and ensure that these relationships are mutually beneficial. To build this trust and ensure that our programs and services are reaching everyone in Pierce County, including those who don't speak English as their first language, we will "work to better integrate our Cultural Ambassador Program and contracting with community members with marginalized communities."

To complete the feedback loop, we also must track data to tell us how we're doing and how we can continually improve. While we track data related to our strategies, targets, and programming, the District is primarily a boots-on-the-ground organization focused

on implementing projects, not collecting data. However, we exist within a network of community partners, many of whom have their own strategic plans spanning everything from local jurisdiction priorities to recovery efforts of the entire Puget Sound region. To ensure that our strategic actions and the targets we're trying to achieve are also helping partners at every level achieve their goals, we will “institutionalize collection and review of partner data to align with the District's work”.

Taken together, these key actions will help us achieve our Mission, Vision, and each of our long-term goals.

#### **Key Measures:**

- Mutual benefit of partnership over time
- Ability to incorporate community feedback into programming/operations

	<b>Key Action</b>	<b>Five-Year Target(s)</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
1	Prioritize relationship building in underrepresented communities to build trust.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Program delivery is representative of Pierce County demographics</li><li>● (Color code as also being a qualitative measure)</li></ul>	Q1 2021 - Q4 2025
a	Conduct analysis of underrepresented communities to identify where to begin building and growing relationships		Q1 2021 - Q4 2022
b	Explore viability of programming such as DirtCorps or Veterans programs that engage and provide service to socially disadvantaged community members		Q1 2023 - Q4 2025

c	Cultivate relationships that are mutually beneficial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support community groups in addressing their needs through staff time/services/volunteer hours (integrate into annual work planning)</li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q4 2025
2	<b>Conduct collaborative community engagement efforts with our partners and community members to create a feedback loop to adaptively manage our program delivery to address the needs of the community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>All programs have a community feedback and adaptive management process implemented</b></li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q4 2025
a	Develop a system for making this community feedback actionable		
b	Create and implement community engagement process and provide staff with necessary training for authentic community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All outreach staff have training, knowledge, and tools necessary</li> <li>All programs implement collaborative community engagement processes</li> </ul>	an accountability buddy program (when possible) so that staff with relationships can provide context to those who are new
c	Engage farming community on needs to improve access to farm community goods through a co-op approach (e.g. land matching, shared livestock Management, Buying Clubs, etc.)		

3	Institutionalize collection and review of partner data to align with PCD's work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner data is integrated into GIS prioritizations</li> <li>• Traditional Ecological Knowledge is incorporated as part of the feedback loop/adaptive management</li> </ul>	
a	Integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge		by Q4 2022
b	Implement structure for protecting Traditional Ecological Knowledge		by Q4 2021
4	Work to better integrate our Cultural Ambassador Program and contracting with community members with marginalized communities		
a	Work with agency partners to model and replicate our Cultural Ambassador Program		Q1 2021-Q4 2023

## STRATEGY 8: ALIGN INTERNAL OPERATIONS AND EXTERNAL PROGRAMMING WITH DISTRICT VALUES

We strive for excellence in all that we do and recognize that the internal culture we create is what enables us to achieve excellence. Values are meaningless if they aren't reflected by behavior and so we must live our values if we are to achieve our goals. When our values are in tight alignment with our internal operations and external programming we increase our diversity, credibility, relevancy, and quality of program delivery. Our reputation is our most important currency. Keeping in alignment with our values at every turn will support our reputational value with clients, constituents, and partners, employee morale, and key decision makers.

We will “embed our organizational values into our internal culture and evaluate opportunities for continuous improvement”. Our organizational values begin with equity, being committed to serving all people, and so this strategy starts with the key action that we will “center equity in our administrative procedures and program delivery.” Over the previous 5-years, our equity initiative has shaped our hiring practices, led to our Cultural Ambassadors Program that delivers programming to low-English proficiency communities, integrated equity into data driven prioritization processes, and much more. While we've made great progress, we still have a long way to go on our equity journey. Over the next 5-years, we will deepen our commitment to equity by “moving from non-racist to actively anti-racist as an organization” and by “launching a training platform so District staff can engage in continuous education opportunities emphasizing our diversity, equity, and inclusion work.”

Integrity is another core value of ours: doing what we say we will do while upholding the highest standards of ethical behavior and being honest and transparent about it. Internally, to achieve this transparency and help us and our partners hold ourselves more accountable, we will “create greater efficiency in data and document management through a standardized and universal organizational system”. This will help us not only improve data management, but will facilitate better reporting, and better relationship management.

Being great stewards of the natural resources of Pierce County is also a core value of ours. To deepen our impact in stewardship we will “expand our stewardship capacity through a program needs assessment and increase capacity for work crew assistance.” Under this key action, we are targeting a 20% increase of the acres we have in active restoration.

As outlined in Strategy 7, collaboration is not only a core value, but central to how we work. While Strategy 7 expands upon how we collaborate with the community and our partners, collaboration is also key to our internal culture and operations. We have a suite of “Cross Program Teams” that help keep our staff out of the silos of their program teams, helping expand our efforts around sustainability, morale, equity, communications and more. In the spirit of continuous improvement, we will “refine our cross program teams and develop disappearing task groups as needed to help achieve strategic goals.”

While our reputation is our most important currency, we wouldn’t have the reputation we have without commitment to people as a core value. Continue workplace modernization initiative to ensure retention of staff. In addition to the ways that this strategic plan has shown our commitment to the people of this community, we are committed to our staff and creating a supportive, team-oriented workplace. To maintain this commitment, over the next 5-years we will “continue our workplace modernization initiative to ensure retention of staff,” including initiatives such as a pay for performance program and standardizing feedback loops for organizational and programmatic decision making.

Together, these efforts will help us achieve our final core value: excellence, always seeking to improve our practices in order to provide innovative solutions to ever-changing conditions. The previous strategies highlight how we will achieve excellence in our program delivery, but we will also “achieve excellence, integrity, and accountability as an organization” by: leveraging every dollar in rate revenue by 80 cents in grants and contracts annually; achieving good governance status from the State Conservation Commission; and receiving a clean audit from the State Auditor Annually.

Excellence is also achieved through continuous improvement in our strategic approach. While we are proud of the work our staff, program directors, board of supervisors, and community members put into this strategic plan, we also recognize the work is not done. As we move forward to implement this plan, we will continue to “evolve the District’s strategic approach to focus on 5-year outcomes rather than our historic focus on short-term outputs.” It’s not simply that we want to see more trees planted, more acres

restored, and more diverse communities served, we want to see these efforts effectively lead to cleaner water, more resilient communities, and ecosystems restored. Our commitment to our values will get us there.

#### **Key Measures:**

- Staff satisfaction with organizational structures, systems and practices
- Staff capacity to practice equity in all spaces (program delivery, work relationships, etc.)
- Return on investment in shift toward becoming an outcomes-based organization

	<b>Key Action</b>	<b>Five-Year Target(s)</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
1	<b>Center equity in our administrative procedures and program delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Decision making screen is designed, standardized and used by all staff in hiring practices and program design</li></ul>	Q3 2021
a	Develop a decision-making tool based on organizational values, which provides an analytical framework to objectively weigh and balance the different values, yet still allows for qualitative judgment.		Q3 2021 - Q2 2022
b	Begin tracking service hours provided by site location to establish base information about equitable distribution of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Equitable distribution of programs and services</li></ul>	
c	Begin tracking demographic data as part of our event/workshop registration system to establish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Programs and services delivery are representative of Pierce County demographics</li></ul>	Q1 2021

	baseline information on whether we're achieving our equity goals		
d	Standardize and train all staff in the use of and implementation of all new equitable practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equitable hiring/recruitment practices are utilized in every hire</li> <li>• Equity team reviews current and future job descriptions</li> </ul>	
e	Focus recruitment of people of color on contracted volunteer leaders for workshop and program delivery		
2	Embed our organizational values into our internal culture and evaluate opportunities for continuous improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District values are understood by 100% of staff as measured in the Biannual Staff Survey</li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q4 2025
3	Create greater efficiency in data and document management through a standardized and universal organizational system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff feel more knowledgeable in how to navigate organizational documents/templates/files; administrative staff spend less time repeating themselves</li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q4 2022
4	Launch a training platform so District staff can engage in continuous education opportunities emphasizing our diversity, equity, and inclusion work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equity dashboard indicators Develop a menu of training options to support staff utilization of professional development budget</li> </ul>	Q1 2022
5	Move from non-racist to actively anti-racist as an organization as the next step in our evolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action is essentially the target</li> </ul>	

a	Develop talking points for all staff to help communicate/respond to reactions to this effort		
6	Refine cross program teams and develop disappearing task groups as needed to help achieve strategic goals		Q2 2021 - Q4 2021
7	Expand Stewardship capacity through program needs assessment and increase capacity for work crew assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal evaluation of crew needs</li> <li>Stewardship capacity needs are met; 20% increase in acres in active restoration</li> </ul>	
8	Continue workplace modernization initiative to ensure retention of staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>90% of staff recognize PCD as a great place to work as reflected in the Biannual Staff Survey</li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q4 2025
a	Implement a Pay for Performance program.		
b	Design and implement other modernization initiatives (e.g. work from home/work-life balance)		
c	Standardize feedback loops for organizational or programmatic decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>80% feel included in major organizational decisions as measured by Biannual Staff Survey</li> </ul>	Finalized in Q4 2021
9	Achieve excellence, integrity, and accountability as an organization.		

a	Leverage rate revenue by 80% of revenue from grants and contracts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For every \$1 in rates funding, the district raises 80 cents in non-rate revenues for our mission; Leverage by 80% annually</li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q4 2025
b	Achieve good governance status from the State Conservation Commission		
c	Receive a clean audit from the State Auditor annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actions are the targets (Qualitative Targets here)</li> </ul>	
10	<b>Evolve the District's strategic approach to focus on 5-year outcomes rather than our historic focus on short-term outputs.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adaptive management and future plans fully align with regional restoration goals and targets.</li> </ul>	Q2 2021 - Q3 2021
a	Align District conservation goals with broader Puget Sound regional recovery goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adaptive management and future plans fully align with regional restoration goals and targets.</li> </ul>	
b	District goals align with local watershed goals		

## STRATEGY 9: CREATE CLIMATE-RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

The future holds a great deal of uncertainty for our communities. The challenges we face today may only become greater as the effects of climate change become more pronounced. The impacts of a changing climate are already being felt whether as increasing flood frequency, an increase in the number of annual wildfires, drought conditions that are forcing farmers to irrigate more, or a reduced snowpack resulting in harmful stream conditions for already endangered salmon. Frontline communities - especially those subjugated to historical and current racial and systemic oppression - are acutely feeling these impacts. Our work is to engage and build trust collaboratively with local communities and diverse stakeholder groups to help identify, plan for, and address the most pressing risks our communities face in a changing climate. Together, we can make our communities more resilient to climate change impacts and reverse climate change trajectories by implementing carbon mitigation and sequestration strategies.

This strategy is seated with our Climate Resiliency Program; however, it's all of our other programs, Farm, Water Quality, Habitat, and Harvest, that do the on-the-ground work that will have the biggest direct impact on increased climate resiliency. This strategy is largely aimed at giving each of our core programs the knowledge and tools necessary to maximize and track the impact of their ongoing work in relation to creating greater climate resiliency. To this end, we will "integrate climate impacts science (regionally downscaled models) and local applied climate research to update watershed basin prioritization and on-the-ground planning." We can't do everything everywhere, so we must be strategic about where and what work we do to ensure it has the greatest impact.

The scale of the work and investment needed to create climate resilient communities can be intimidating, and so we will look to ways we can leverage market economies to help bring greater resources to this work. We will "inventory carbon sequestration per program service across all Pierce CD programs (and) explore (the) feasibility of leveraging additional revenue streams through carbon offset trading programs." We successfully launched one such program at the end 2020, becoming the first Conservation District in the country to develop a carbon credit trading program through City Forest Credits and monetizing the riparian restoration work we do in priority habitat areas.

Even with scalable impact and investment, creating truly climate resilient communities is not a task we could possibly achieve alone - we need as many partners and as much of our Pierce County community engaged in this work with us as possible. To

achieve this collaboration, we will help “build a broad, diverse and inclusive climate coalition that ensures our work is impactful, coordinated and relevant to our mission.” Community engagement processes, such as “Climate Dialogues will inform the District of local needs” that we can adaptively manage into this and other regional plans. We will “meet with experts in the climate policy space once a year” to ensure program strategy is of highest value. Ultimately, this will help us “expand beyond individual services models (benefiting property owners) to include community ownership models” exploring the feasibility of community programs such as Firewise, community solar, community forestry, and aquaculture.

As a whole, we aim to position our organization as “a community leader in implementation of climate resilience actions.” We don’t view this leadership simply in the context of developing planning and implementation tools, nor only being a convener of the community, but also in terms of our own investment. We’ve set ambitious goals to install solar at our Conservation Center, to further electrify our fleet, and implement other best practices at our facility.

This strategy will put us well on our way to our long-term goal: “By 2040, Pierce County communities are leading the way with increased confidence and self-determination in building resilience to the impacts of climate change. Pierce Conservation District employs the best available science and practices social equity to provide the information, resources, and skills to mitigate climate change and support communities to achieve this goal.”

#### **Key Measures:**

- Activity completed by and projects made possible from climate coalition and other collaborative climate action planning
- Tons of carbon sequestered as a result of our programming

	Key Action	Five-Year Target(s)	Timeline
1	Build broad, diverse and inclusive climate coalition that ensures our work is impactful, coordinated and relevant to our mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coalition helps define broader goals and delegates tasks to various partners</li><li>• Supports adaptive management of our program</li></ul>	Q1 2021 - Q4 2021

a	Climate Dialogues will inform the District of local needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Climate Dialogues forum with summary report and identified findings and next steps</li> </ul>	Q2 2021
b	Meet with experts in the climate policy space once a year to ensure program strategy is of highest value e.g. Climate Solutions		Q3 2021
2	<b>Inventory carbon sequestration per program service across all Pierce CD programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• X tons of carbon sequestered across all programs by 2025 (to be adaptively managed once we have a baseline understanding of our capabilities)</li> </ul>	Q3 2021 - Q3 2022
a	Explore feasibility of leveraging additional revenue streams through carbon offset trading programs		2021
b	As applicable, develop carbon trading markets/carbon monetization to leverage funding for additional on the ground work		2023
3	<b>Integrate climate impacts science (regionally downscaled models) and local applied climate research to update watershed basin prioritization and on-the-ground planning.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate science is integrated into all program prioritizations, planning, and implementation</li> </ul>	Q1 2021 - Q4 2023

a	Develop and install practical, user friendly planning tools (e.g. GIS/COMET Farm) implementing practices into each program		2021
b	Conduct grant funded pilot projects with research partners to fill data gaps		2023
<b>4</b>	<b>Expand beyond individual services models (benefiting property owners) to include community ownership models</b>		<b>Q1 2022 - Q4 2025</b>
a	Explore feasibility of supporting FireWise program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on feasibility - begin planning if applicable</li> </ul>	Q3 2022
b	Explore feasibility of supporting community solar program in partnership with Native American Tribes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on feasibility - begin planning if applicable</li> </ul>	Q3 2023
c	Explore feasibility of supporting community forest program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on feasibility - begin planning if applicable</li> </ul>	Q3 2024
d	Explore feasibility of seagrass planting and aquaculture program for the purposes of sequestration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on feasibility - begin planning if applicable</li> </ul>	Q3 2025
<b>5</b>	<b>Be a community leader in implementation of climate resilience</b>		<b>Q1 2021 - Q2 2023</b>

	<b>actions</b>		
a	Install solar at the District's Conservation Center		Q2 2023
b	Further electrify the District's fleet of vehicles		Q1 2021
c	Implement multiple Water Quality BMPs at the District's Conservation Center		Q1 2023

## APPENDIX A: DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

**Anti-Racism:** The work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach, and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts.

**Clean Water Act (CWA):** With final amendments passed in 1972, “the Clean Water Act establishes the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States and regulating quality standards for surface waters”.

**Climate Resilience:** “The capacity of a community, business, or natural environment to prevent, withstand, respond to, and recover from a disruption” caused by climate change.

**Ecoliterate:** “An ecoliterate person is prepared to be an effective member of sustainable society, with well-rounded abilities of head, heart, hands, and spirit, comprising an organic understanding of the world and participatory action within and with the environment.”

**Ecosystem:** a biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment.

**Equity / Equitable:** A state in which all people in a given society share equal rights and opportunities (from Manza, J., & Sauder, M. (2009). Inequality and society: social science perspectives on social stratification. New York, NY: Norton.). Improving equity is to promote justice, fairness and impartiality in procedures, processes and the distribution of resources by institutions or systems

**Key Action:** Strategic actions that, if enacted, allow the District to advance toward our desired outcomes. Key Actions are organized by Strategy and are tasks that program staff complete to reach their target.

**Key Measure(s):** Measures are units that Pierce Conservation District uses to inform, monitor progress on, evaluate and improve its programming and operations. The District tracks an extensive number of measures; **Key Measures** are those measures that directly correspond to outcomes reflected in this Strategic Plan.

**Local Integrating Organizations:** Local Integrating Organizations are local forums, supported by the Puget Sound Partnership, that meet regularly throughout the year to collaboratively work to develop, coordinate, and implement strategies and actions that contribute to the protection and recovery of the local ecosystem.

**Long-Term Goal:** 2040 Targets that Pierce Conservation District aspires to achieve within the next twenty years. Our Long-Term Goals serve as the “North Star” to which we orient our work.

**Riparian:** relating to wetlands adjacent to rivers and streams.

**Strategy:** Structures in place to achieve Long-Term Goals.

**Sub-Action(s):** Detailed task(s) that program staff complete under the umbrella of a given Key Action.

**Target(s):** The measurable result(s) we want to achieve within the next five years from completing the corresponding Key Action or Sub-Action. Targets are included in each Strategy’s table of Key Actions.

## APPENDIX B: PIERCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT NETWORK MAP

This 5-year Strategic Plan prioritizes the cultivation and strengthening of partnerships with communities, groups, organizations, coalitions, and jurisdictions. Leveraging our current and prospective partners' strengths is key to making the greatest impact with the most efficient use of our resources. To supplement our Key Actions outlined in the Strategy section of our Strategic Plan, we created a visual representation of our expected outcomes from our investment in these partnerships in the form of a network map. This network map depicts our current relationships with established partners and the anticipated expansion/deepening of our network connections. To explore this interactive tool on our digital Strategic Plan, visit

<https://piercecd.org/593/4639/Strategic-Plan-Appendix-B-Network-Map>.

## APPENDIX C: COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF MEASURES

Because this Strategic Plan outlines the District's targeted efforts and priorities for the next 5 years, it does not provide a comprehensive list of all measures used to monitor, improve, and evaluate our program effectiveness, impact, and operations. In our digital Strategic Plan, we detail all measures included in our Constituent Relationship Management system, and highlight the ones that have been added or elevated as a result of our strategic planning process. Explore our comprehensive list of measures at <https://piercecd.org/594/4640/Appendix-C-Comprehensive-List-of-Measure>.

## APPENDIX D: BECOMING AN OUTCOMES-BASED ORGANIZATION

While we feel this 5-year Strategic plan will help us move towards our long-term goals, it is still very much focused on short-term “outputs”, such as: how many trees are we planting, how many acres are we restoring, and how many people are we engaging? Ultimately, our goals are to see habitat restored, water quality improved, farmland conserved, and to help create more equitable and resilient communities.

The outputs identified in Appendix C: Comprehensive List of Measures, are what we believe we need to track in order to gauge progress towards these broader goals. Yet, many of pressures that lead to degraded habitat, impaired water quality, rapidly disappearing farmland, and inequitable and at-risk communities are broader than our direct control. How do we ensure that our strategic efforts are in fact leading to the outcomes we wish to see? Through adaptive management. While this plan is “complete”, we seek to continuously improve and learn from our community and the effectiveness of on-the-ground actions.

To this end, we will be embarking on a continued strategic analysis of our outputs to help us evolve into a more outcomes-based organization. Below, we outline a few of the essential questions we will engage with starting in late 2021 in order to define the outcomes we seek to achieve. These are just the start and not at all an exhaustive list:

### **Strategy 1: Create Communities of Action**

- What marks the birth of an ecological steward?
- What becomes possible when a community commits to an environmental cause?
- How do we know that we’re “speaking someone’s language”?
- What is our role in catalyzing change?

### **Strategy 2: Protect and Restore Functioning Ecosystems**

- What aspects of our culture can we lean on for ecosystem renewal?
- How do we have a positive impact on places and spaces beyond our reach?
- How do functioning ecosystems contribute to Watershed health in the upper, mid, and lower watershed?

- How do functioning ecosystems look different at various scales of urban, agriculture, forest and wilderness landscapes?
- What impact will community involvement in ecosystem stewardship have on the watershed? On decision making in our communities?

#### **Strategy 3: Improve Conditions for Healthy Salmon**

- What is our role in rescuing what could soon be lost forever?
- How do we activate our capacity and network to amplify local salmon/orca recovery efforts?
- How will shifting the conversation and engaging more community members impact salmon recovery in our region?

#### **Strategy 4: Improve Water Quality**

- How do you catalyze social change? What makes the difference in whether an idea, trend, or program takes off?
- How will community voice impact the development of our programs and the adoption of GSI in our watershed?
- How will our work around water quality impact human health and wellbeing?
- Where can our organization make the most measurable impact on water quality?

#### **Strategy 5: Advance Agricultural Systems**

- What meaningful difference do we make for farmers in Pierce County? What would happen in Pierce County agriculture if we were not here?
- How do we plant seeds of change today that yield healthy harvest 50, 100, 200 years from now?

#### **Strategy 6: Promote Community-Based Food Systems**

- How are we amplifying the voices of our community? What happens when their voices are heard?
- What bridges the divide between food access and food security?
- How do stories create a new future?

#### **Strategy 7: Engage Community as Valued Partners**

- What is at the heart of mutual partnership?

- How does our organization reflect our community at all levels? What does this mean for decision making, resource distribution and partnerships?
- How can the data we share tell new stories? How will that impact the work of our organization and the work of our partners?

#### **Strategy 8: Align Internal Operations and External Programming with District Values**

- What if our internal and external work is out of alignment?
- How can we see our values in action in our work?
- What is created in our community when our values are in both our operations and programming?

#### **Strategy 9: Create Climate-Resilient Communities**

- What measures of effectiveness can we see as a direct result of our work?
- How is our work on climate change part of a fractal? What happens at our small scale that reflects large scale work, what are the things we are doing that will inspire larger action in other areas/at other scales?
- How does living into the climate resilient future help us transform our community?