

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2010 to 2015

## *Nevada State Conservation Commission*



conserving  
natural resources  
*for our future*

---

**NOVEMBER 2, 2009**

### COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Joe Sicking, Chairman

Vance Vesco, Vice-Chairman

Joseph Fortier

Chris Freeman

Donna Lamm

Eric Rieman

Leland Wallace

Ed Foster, NV Dept. of Agriculture

Dr. Rangesan Narayanan, University of Nevada Reno

Jim Lawrence, Executive Secretary



***The Function of a Conservation District: To take available technical, financial and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land user for conservation of soil, water and related resources.***

## **STATEWIDE VISION, MISSION, BELIEFS AND PHILOSOPHY**

### **VISION –**

The Nevada State Conservation Commission (SCC) is the most effective, recognized leader in conserving and protecting Nevada's natural resources through partnerships and assistance with local conservation efforts.

### **MISSION -**

The mission of the SCC is to provide leadership with natural resource conservation issues for the citizens of the state of Nevada, by facilitating conservation district goals and public and private partnerships, dispensing conservation funds, advising and overseeing conservation districts, and administering Nevada Revised Statutes.

### **WHAT WE BELIEVE IN (VALUES)**

- ❖ Wise use, protection and sustainability of our natural resources and their importance for our future generations
- ❖ Projects and programs locally developed and locally implemented – "Locally Led Conservation"
- ❖ Conservation efforts through non-regulation
- ❖ Programs should be voluntary
- ❖ Active conservation districts delivering highly cost-effective programs, products and services
- ❖ Resource solutions should be balanced – common sense
- ❖ Producing and protecting our food and fiber and protecting the land that sustains us
- ❖ The value of volunteers

The job of protecting human health and the environment of the State of Nevada is never done. The children and grandchildren of each succeeding generation will judge the success of this generation's efforts. We will be judged by what we knew about the impacts of pollution, what steps we took to learn more, and what we did to protect the natural resources. Increasing knowledge provides us with ever-increasing evidence of the sensitivity of the environment. We have learned that economic prosperity and environmental protection are dependent upon each other. Without economic prosperity we lack the resources to protect the environment; without environmental protection, economic prosperity is hollow and short-lived. In our current economic challenges, the Nevada State Conservation Commission believes they are the leaders to encourage good environmental decisions now to avert future economic disasters. The commission also believes the local input and knowledge is critical to making effective decisions. Conservation Districts provide this critical element to guide decisions affecting the quality of life and all aspects of life including plant and animal life and the natural resources that all life depends on.

*"Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land." Aldo Leopold*

## **PHILOSOPHY-**

Public service is a public trust. As public servants we take pride in the service we perform and provide to our local citizens. We will be open, ethical, responsive, accountable, and dedicated to the public we serve. We will foster a working environment with other agencies and the public free of bias and respectful to programs and needs. We will operate efficiently and spend the public's money wisely. We affirm that the conservation of our soil and water resources is both a public and private benefit. We believe the existing unique organizational structure of Conservation Districts, whereby owners, operators, and citizens of the state's urban areas, farms, and ranches organize and govern themselves with respect to soil and water resources through a program of voluntary participation, is the most realistic and cost effective means of achieving the state's goals for the conservation and wise use of its natural resources. We will use public participation and collaboration to address natural resource issues at the local level.

*"The conservation of our natural resources and their proper use constitute the fundamental problem which underlies almost every other problem of our national life." Theodore Roosevelt*

## **HISTORY AND OVERVIEW-**

The creation of the State Conservation Commission and Nevada Conservation Districts is entrenched in the Dust Bowl Era of the 1930s. This period in time was marked by years of sustained drought, intensive farming without erosion reducing techniques, dust storms and low commodity prices. Coinciding with the Great Depression, agricultural losses only added to social and economic perils.

During the discovery period in America, early settlers witnessed the destructiveness of soil erosion and made various attempts to control it. Topsoil on hundreds of thousands of acres was washed away or depleted to such an extent as to inhibit cultivation of farming. Enough soil was being washed off the nation's fields and pastures to load a train of freight cars that would encircle the earth 18 times at the equator. In 1928 Congress adopted the Buchanan amendment to the Agricultural Bills to protect private and public lands from soil and water damage or losses and provided federal funds to implement surveys and develop methods of control and prevention.

Congress passed the Soil Conservation Act of 1935 to establish the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), originally the Soil Erosion Service, in the Department of Agriculture. The SCS, now the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), was charged with developing and implementing programs to protect, improve, and safeguard the Nation's lands from soil erosion and flood damage. This federal agency needed local leadership to coordinate their efforts and tie them into local conditions and priorities. To achieve the local component to achieve their goals, the U.S. Department of Agriculture distributed a model law in May 1936 to serve as a guide for states to enact laws to facilitate the creation of conservation districts. President Franklin D. Roosevelt encouraged his support via a letter to state governors in early

1937 urging each to adopt legislation similar to his model to provide for the organization of local conservation districts.

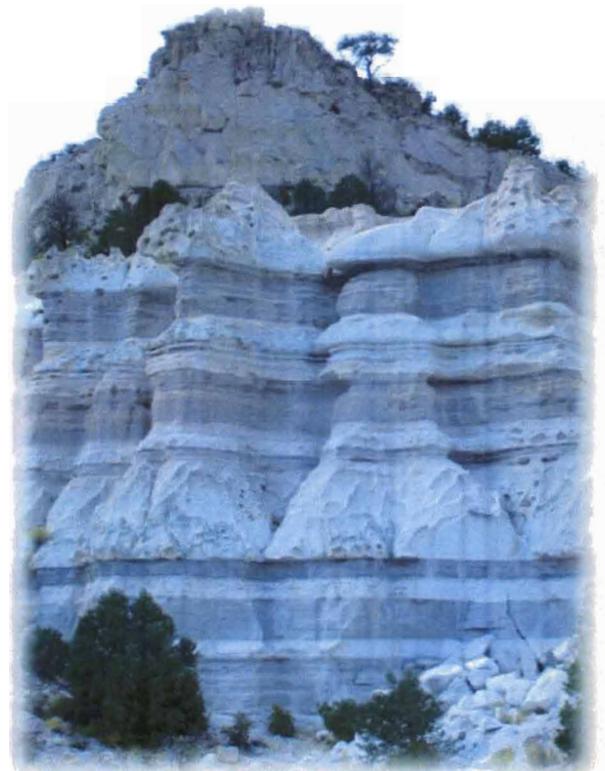
The establishment of conservation districts in Nevada began in 1937 with the enactment of the Conservation District Law. The first districts formed in 1938 were Carson Valley Soil Conservation District, Meadow Valley SCD and Pahranaagat Valley SCD (now Lincoln County CD), Mason Valley SCD, and Smith Valley SCD. These districts focused on the need for water and soil conservation, as well as flood and erosion control. Today there are twenty-eight conservation districts in Nevada.

The lead conservation district was Meadow Valley Soil Conservation District (now Lincoln County Conservation District) led by John Conaway. The main focus of this district was flood control. The district worked closely with Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which was an organization that had the power to deal directly with federal agencies to carry out local programs. The CCC provided the workforce needed to implement many flood control projects in Lincoln County from 1938 to 1941.

Conservation districts covered the remainder of the state after World War II. Many of the districts that formed between 1946 and 1954 did so to gain access to military surplus equipment. Some of that early equipment is still in use in district equipment programs throughout the state.

The Nevada Association of Conservation Districts (NvACD) was established in the late 1950's, and the conservation commission and the division of conservation districts were established in 1973. Prior to the formation of the commission, a state committee worked for years to establish the commission. The State of Nevada followed the national recommendation of the National Association of Conservation Districts to change the names nationwide from "Soil and Water Conservation Districts" to "Conservation Districts". This was in part because the emphasis from the Dust Bowl Days being erosion control had been expanded to address all natural resources. In 1973, Nevada amended Nevada Administrative Code Section 548 and Nevada Revised Statutes Section 548 to establish the State Conservation Commission to provide leadership to conservation districts as well as administer the law. The amended statute also reflected the name change Nevada Soil Conservation Districts to Nevada Conservation Districts.

*"The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value." Theodore Roosevelt*



The State Conservation Commission is comprised of seven commissioners appointed by the Governor. They include two representatives from each of the three areas, and one member "At Large". Typically, these commissioners also serve as supervisors on a conservation district and serve a four-year staggered term on the commission. In addition to these seven commissioners, the Dean of the College of Agriculture of the University of Nevada-Reno, and the Director of the State Department of Agriculture also serve as commissioners with full voting rights.

Since the establishment of the commission, districts have been taking on more programs and responsibilities. The districts were involved in the development of the state's first Handbook of Best Management Practices in the late 1970's. Since then districts have been forming more partnerships and entering into Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with a variety of agencies that in the past may not have been considered partners.

NvACD has grown to be the leading force to unite conservation districts. The association has worked with the commission to develop standards for conservation districts. They also worked to get legislation for state funding for districts. In 1995, district funding became a part of the Governor's approved budget with each active district receiving \$3,400.00. Through the efforts of the association, the commission, district supervisors and district employees, funding was increased to \$5,000 per district in 1999 by the state legislature. In 2009 however, the grant was reduced to \$4,200 per district amid statewide budget reductions.

The current network of 28 districts is the logical vehicle to provide local leadership for natural resource conservation. There are over 2,000 cooperators in Nevada plus large urban areas that are directly benefiting from district programs today. If there is a limiting factor to the public's perception of the district program, it can probably be attributed to many districts maintaining a low profile in their local communities. However, districts are firm supporters of the locally lead process to develop local solutions dealing with soil and water conservation, wildlife and their habitat, noxious weeds, education, and urban issues.



## ***ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS, STRENGTHS, AND CHALLENGES***

*"When the land does well for its owner, and the owner does well by his land - when both end up better by reason of their partnership - then we have conservation."*

Aldo Leopold

Conservation districts in Nevada are structured to provide services at the local level. Districts can have five elected supervisors and may have two appointed supervisors representing the city or county within their boundary.

Their limiting factor is funding. By state law, local districts may not levy taxes. Districts receive \$4,200 from the state and most receive funding from other sources including a county match in most counties. Districts receive technical assistance from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) through a national partnership. Although funding for districts is a limiting factor, it also demonstrates a highly successful cost effective program that is unique in any level of government. In fiscal year 2008, districts matched state funding by a 27:1 ratio through federal, private, city, county and in-kind sources. In 2009 the economic challenges facing the state required budget cuts in state government. Although all options were considered and implemented, the conservation district grant program could not be protected. The Division of Conservation Districts lost some travel funding, training and operating funding as well as reducing the full-time administrative assistant position to a part-time position. The *Grants to Districts* program was reduced from \$5,000 per year to \$4,200 per year per district. A lack of optimism in the future economic situation may mean additional cuts to the program.

A major concern by local districts is the inability to employ at least one full time employee, to maintain an office, and thereby be more available and responsive to landowners and operators seeking district assistance.

The Nevada Division of Conservation Districts is staffed with two full time professional staff and one part-time administrative assistant. The division is able to provide some technical assistance to districts mainly by training supervisors and overseeing the operation of district programs. The division receives its funding from the state's general fund. In order to expand division staff support to districts there will be a need to look at other potential funding sources. The commission passed a resolution in 2004 to propose a change in the Nevada Revised Statutes 548 that would authorize them to distribute other sources of funds to conservation districts through the division of conservation districts. During the 2005 legislative session, Senate Bill #294 was introduced and successfully passed that provides the state conservation commission authorization to apply for and distribute grant funds in addition to the established state grant program. This new authorization opens doors to many new possibilities.

Since their creation, districts have effectively administered programs based on the voluntary application of conservation practices. This approach has proven successful in the ranching and farming communities and urban areas. Most Nevada landowners have great respect for natural resources including water quality and wildlife habitat.



Nevada Pelicans - On the Truckee River - by Sam Jackson, NDEP

As a governmental agency, conservation districts possess perhaps the most unique ability of any public or private entity. This is the ability to work across boundaries of both public and private land. Districts are also able to, and often do, work in cooperation with other conservation districts to address problems on a watershed basis. For this reason, many federal and state agencies look to conservation districts to address and implement natural resource projects.

## **SIGNIFICANT TRENDS, THREATS, AND OPPORTUNITIES**

*"Whatever may be the wishes or inclinations of the people of this country, this task of protecting the land against increased impairment and destruction must be fought from now on." Hugh Hammond Bennett*

The Nevada State Conservation Commission has identified the following trends, threats and opportunities for improvement in the State that have re-directed priorities and efforts of conservation districts, and thus the focus of support and direction of the Commission.

- *Urbanization:* The rapid rate of urbanization in the state has resulted in the loss of irrigated and prime farmland
- *Urbanization:* Rapid urbanization has also resulted in an increase of demand for water resources. Often this results in the sale of water rights previously held by agricultural producers
- *Increased demands on natural resources*
- *Economic Downturn:* Nevada is experiencing the longest economic recession in recorded history. In a national recession, Nevada is usually one of the last states to recover

because of the state's income being reliant on others luxury time being spent in the state. Challenging times are ahead for conservation when health and public safety are viewed as a higher priority

- *Continued government intrusion and dissatisfaction with government:* The trend in the general public is a distrust and overall negative perception of government. This creates an increasing challenge for conservation districts as well as the commission
- *Aging agricultural producer population:* Many of Nevada's agricultural producers have operated for years. Many aging producers are finding that the younger generations are pursuing careers other than the family agricultural business. This trend is leaving the older producers with limited opportunities to continue to live and work on ranches and opens the door for development
- *Increasing "ranchette" ownership:* Subdivided land ownership can create disputes concerning right of way, water delivery and application, conservation practices, etc.
- *Implementation of Endangered Species Act:* Many ranchers, especially those who utilize public land leases, are effected each time a species is listed or proposed for listing
- *Recreational pressures on public and private lands:* These include: damage to the rangeland plants and soils, increased soil erosion, gates being left open, introduction of weed species, etc
- *Lack of understanding of activities and their actions and reactions on natural resources* e.g. infrastructure development in floodplains
- *Lack of appreciation of the benefits that agriculture provides society*
- *More noxious weed programs implemented*
- *Nevada population centers:* Most urban with largest percentage of population in urban areas
- *Difficulty in recruiting new district supervisors*
- *Cooperators with less time to serve on boards due to workload*
- *Much of the general public has less time to offer to volunteer boards*
- *Need to expand search for new supervisors: e.g. school teachers, retired citizens, those not involved in agriculture or livestock production*

*"In the end, we conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught." Baba Dioum, Senegalese poet*

## **SERVICE POPULATION SHIFTS**

For many years the number of people involved in agriculture production has been on the decline; however, the size of many agricultural operations has grown. This is mainly a result of economics. Small agricultural operations find it increasingly difficult to compete with large operations. These same economic forces have required producers to scrutinize their investments in resource protection and conservation activities more closely.

Changes in land ownership impact conservation programs in four ways. First, each new landowner may have different management objectives and techniques. As ownership changes, conservation plans and practices often change. Second, changes in ownership often result in increased absentee owners. In such cases, those administering conservation

programs may have to deal with a tenant/landowner relationship, which could have different long-term goals. The third effect that a change in land ownership can have on conservation programs is a decline in the recruitment of people to serve as district supervisors due to rural areas transitioning into urban areas that may feel they do not have a tie to the land. The increasing amount of time required managing and caring for private agricultural land inversely affects the amount of time available to serve as a volunteer district supervisor.

The fourth issue is the expansion of urban areas into agricultural lands. There is extreme pressure to convert lands and water from agriculture to urban, which creates a whole new demand on natural resources. Nevada is really an urban state with a majority of the state's population in the urban areas of Clark County and Washoe County. The conservation districts in Clark County, Washoe County and the Carson City areas are working on many urban issues such as flood control, watershed health, river corridor protection and restoration, water quality, and wildlife habitat in an urban setting.

While Nevada is a large state with vast natural resources, the capability of our land resources is fixed. As our population continues to grow, pressure for food and fiber will increase and the need for voluntary cooperation from private landowners will require

increased efforts to avoid the use of regulations. Conservation may become more complex, in most cases, but voluntary programs will continue to be the most efficient and effective means of conserving and protecting the state's natural resources.



## FINANCIAL ANALYSIS AND BUDGET NEEDS

The need for conservation has never been greater, yet the State of Nevada is investing little into conservation efforts. There is an opportunity for the commission and the association to work jointly to increase funding options available to districts. In most cases, the state appropriations from the general fund fall extremely short of covering the expenses a district incurs while performing their duties as mandated by state law. Many districts have unwillingly scaled back their services. The State of Nevada invests only 0.0021%<sup>1</sup> of its budget into conservation, and of that amount, only \$140,000 goes directly to conservation districts through a 'Grants to Districts' program of \$5,000 (reduced to \$4,200 in 2009) per active district in FY09. Nationwide, Nevada ranks 52<sup>nd</sup> out of 52 states and territories (See NASCA Report at end) for state funding support to conservation districts<sup>2</sup>. (See Table 1) At the same time, Nevada districts made a minimum return on that investment of 270% in FY08 by using other sources and innovative methods of getting conservation on the ground. In short, conservation districts are efficient at implementing conservation programs but in many cases lack the funding to accomplish the increasingly important conservation work.

*TABLE 1: Nevada's FY 2009 Conservation Appropriation<sup>1</sup>*

Total State Expenses FY09	\$ 8,849,419,405
General Fund Appropriation to Div. of Conservation Districts	\$ 411,918
Total Appropriated for State Grants to Conservation Districts	\$ 140,000
Percent of Total State Budget	.0021%
National Average <sup>2</sup> (percent of state revenue)	.0560%
National Ranking of 50 States (1=most \$ appropriated; 52-least \$ appropriated incl. Guam & Pac Islands)	52
State Appropriation if appropriated at National Average (as percent of revenue)	\$ 4,955,674

- 1 Nevada Office of State Controller – CAFR Report to Citizens FY09 Appropriations and Authorizations by Department
- 2 National Association of State Conservation Agencies. "State Appropriations for Conservation."



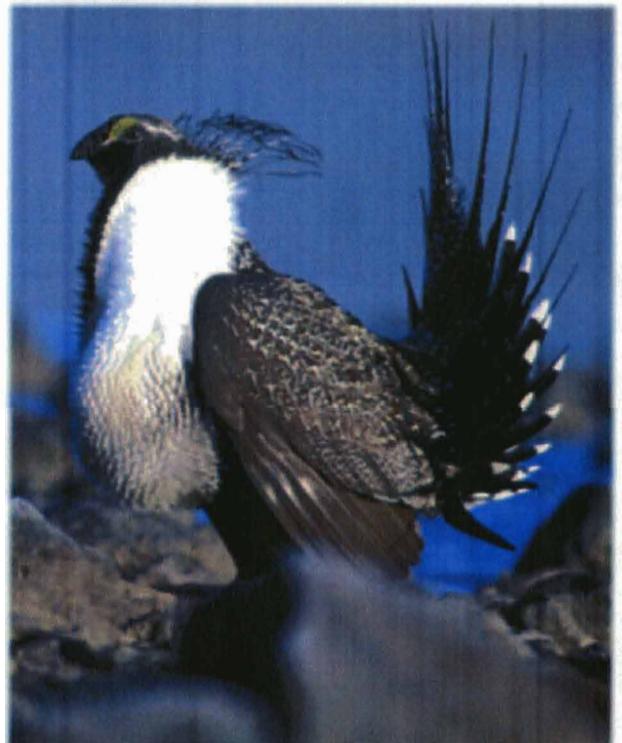
## ***NATURAL RESOURCE CONCERNS***

The Nevada State Conservation Commission serves an active role in several advisory groups that address natural resource issues in the state at the state planning level and the local level via district participation.

*Invasive and Noxious Weeds:* Invasive plants are increasingly infesting Nevada. The invasive species damage and inhibit the reproduction of native species. They not only restrict and interfere with land management objectives but also negatively affect wildlife habitat and forage. Once a plant is classified as an invasive weed, it can attain a noxious, or harmful, status only through legislation. Usually, a weed is declared noxious once its effect upon the environment is understood. More than 500 weeds in the United States and Canada are classified as noxious, presenting an enormous challenge to the landowners impacted by their arrival.

Most invasive weeds in Nevada did not originate here, but were transported from Europe or Asia. Upon the arrival in Nevada, they have spread unchecked because there are no naturally occurring enemies to control them. The fast growth characteristics, high reproductive rates and adaptation to the environment have caused great concern for conservation districts. Noxious weeds reduce the value of agricultural land, rangeland, forests, watersheds, wetlands and wildlife habitats. The increasing time and costs to control, eradicate and restore infested areas can seem to be a never-ending task.

Nevada conservation districts have been the leader to assist in the control and eradication of invasive and noxious weeds for many years. Many districts have developed a strong partnership with their counties and other partners to develop and implement control plans. District programs are very cost-effective by utilizing volunteer time to apply 'integrated pest management' treatments. Conservation districts have often played an important role in monitoring sites to develop effective eradication methods for various invasive weeds in various environmental settings. Districts also play an important role in educating the public about invasive and noxious weeds, often in partnership with agencies such as the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension Service. Districts value sound science and often participate in monitoring, research, and data collection with their partners, University of Nevada Reno, University of Nevada Las Vegas, local weed districts and cooperative weed management groups. As part of an effort to monitor the spread of invasive species, many conservation districts are initiating and/or participating in GIS mapping efforts across the state.

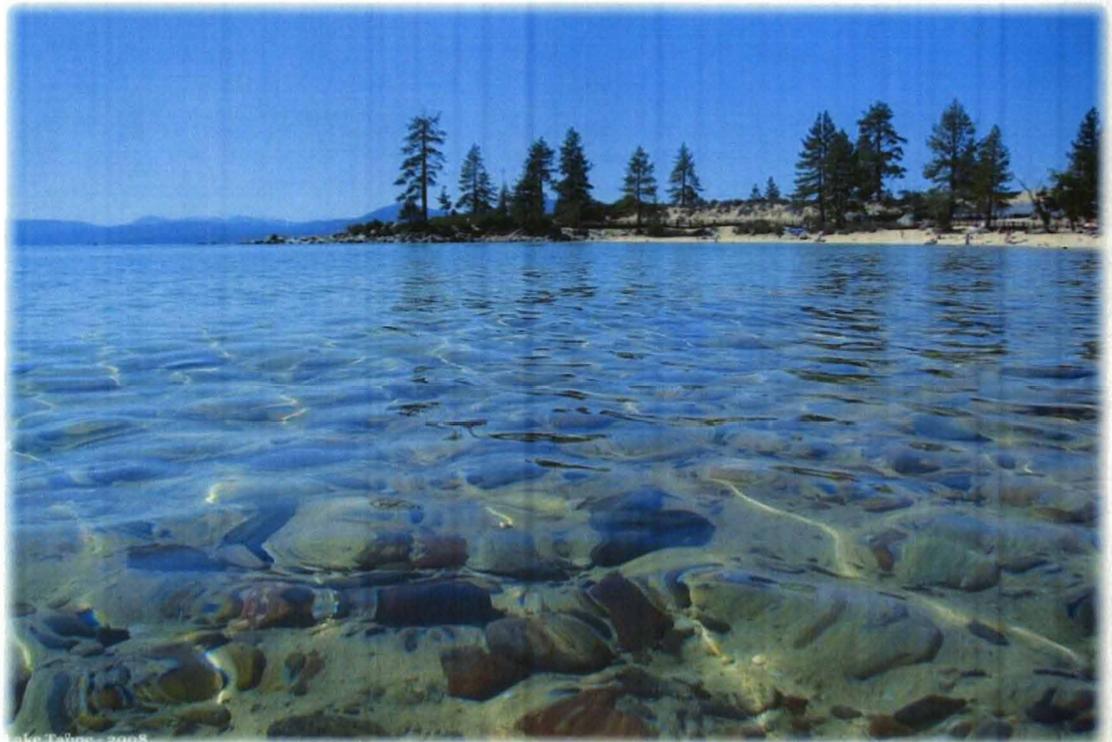


The commission has been successful in assisting conservation districts with their programs and operations and is positioned for future success with the ability to expand their assistance. With increased awareness and visibility of both the commission and conservation districts, the commission could be even more effective.

*Water Quantity/Water Quality:* Nevada is the driest state in the nation. Rapid population expansion has increased urban water use and is estimated to increase by as much as 45% by the year 2020. Water conservation practices are needed to increase water use efficiency. Many conservation districts are actively involved in water conservation education projects including printed materials, conferences, development plan review and participation in negotiated agreements to help improve management issues of water supply.

Watershed management is another area of involvement for conservation districts not only providing technical input at the planning level, but also an active participant at the implementation level of water quality improvement projects. Many of the projects are stream restoration projects throughout the state. Conservation Districts in populated urban areas are active in issues of stormwater management. Working with developers, county and city planners, district supervisors and staff influence development practices by proposing and educating 'Low Impact Development' or LID practices. Using these practices is often a better option disturbing the natural resources but also has become an economic advantage to the developer. Citizens are paying higher prices for 'Open Space' property while the developer and contractors do not have to spend additional funds for implementation.

Conservation districts are often the leader in restoration projects that include numerous partners. Integrated planning and implementation provides benefits in many areas. Some of these include flood control, wildlife habitat, forest health, wildfire, urban horticulture and public policy. The Commission can be a conduit to various state and federal agencies to assist in plan review, permit needs and funding needs to implement district projects.



## ***LINES OF BUSINESS AND STRATEGIES***

### **LINES OF BUSINESS**

- District High Priority Conservation Needs and Projects
- State Water Laws
- District Supervisor Training, Recruitment & Retention
- Promote & Develop Partnerships
- Statewide Outreach & Marketing
- Support, Guidance & Training

### **STRATEGIES**

The goal and purpose of the Nevada State Conservation Commission is to service the 28 conservation districts in a way that will encourage the districts to protect and improve the local natural resources to the maximum extent possible. In order to provide the desired level of assistance, the commission has developed strategies for the use of the limited funds and resources available to them. The strategies also reflect the changes in local natural resource priorities while providing program expertise and technical guidance on a statewide basis.

It is crucial that district supervisors view commission members as their representative on issues of statewide importance. They must understand the different roles of the commission, the association, and their individual districts. Some of the support activities the commission provides include: conducting statewide conservation operations, provide program expertise and technical guidance on a statewide basis in managing and directing a quality conservation program, perform reviews required under Nevada Revised Statutes requirements to determine the impacts of certain activities having the potential to affect soil and water resources, design and implement financial assistance programs directed toward landowners and operators to encourage the application of conservation practices to preserve soil, water, air and animal resources, and conduct conservation information/education programs to increase general awareness of the environmental and economic benefits of the state's conservation efforts.

The SCC has a number of opportunities to increase its effectiveness in servicing districts, one of which is to increase the visibility of the commission. As with districts, the general public is not aware of the commission's existence or the programs and services it provides. Likewise, many districts view the commission as a board with certain requirements, reports, and deadlines. The accomplishments of the commission and the conservation districts at a state level are often not communicated and go unnoticed. As a component of the strategies identified, communication and visibility of both the commission and conservation district accomplishments must be executed to increase visibility.

## **GOALS**

The Nevada State Conservation Commission held a strategic planning session in November 2009. Many of the commission's previous goals that were identified in their 5-year plan have been accomplished. New commissioners, a change in environment and economic changes made it necessary to hold another planning session to identify goals and objectives for the next five years. It is a fact that the previous five-year strategic plan seemed to be too aggressive and seemingly unattainable in some areas, however the commission accomplished much more than was anticipated and believes the aggressive goals will be accomplished with the help of partnerships, cooperation and community-based involvement.

### **Criteria for Selecting Strategic Priorities:**

- Locally identified and led with state wide significance positive impact on natural resources
- Has to be feasible / attainable including funding
- Cost effective and enhance the ability to expand the conservation programs
- Would lead to effective partnerships
- Would have long term benefits
- Would encourage greater community involvement
- Success has to be measurable
- Ability to share and utilize in other capacities / locations
- Will it promote our achievements, and be the go-to agency
- It is legal

The following were identified in the analysis phase of the planning process as issues of strategic importance to address within the next five years. These issues are embodied in the core functions, objectives, and actions of this strategic plan. Using the above criteria, those issues are listed below:

### **District Assistance / Program Planning & Implementation:**

- Provide more staff-supervisor interaction to see what works and what doesn't
- Help the conservation districts protect and preserve current water resources in relation to farming, ranching, wildlife, and non-urban areas
- SCC would exercise some authority to have districts produce a listing of high priority resource concern projects so that staff could assist them with finding and receiving the funds for at least 10 of the districts to fulfill one or more of their prioritized projects
- SCC is the recognized entity that articulates and represents the program accomplishments and needs of each CD
- Become the recognized go-to agency for implementing conservation programs through funding and partnerships with ready-to-go projects
- NV becomes the leader in renewable energy without depleting our natural resources
- Assist landowners with strategies and funding sources to conserve energy and/or produce energy
- With a focus on sustainability, research and disseminate information on alternative crops, organic agriculture, developing new markets and utilizing progressive marketing strategies

### **Partnerships:**

- Using grants, working with partner agencies and organizations to have more of an impact on natural resources in NV
- Relationships built with Forest Service, BLM, NDF, and CA counties on weed control projects
- Develop MOUs to carry out programs with BLM, Forest Service, US Fish & Wildlife, EPA Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, Rural Development, NRCS and others
- Work with partners on improving water laws
- Partner with NRCS to staff at least 4 technical staff to carry out mutual conservation operations
- Working with adjoining states on watershed projects

### **Funding**

- Increase funding to CDs by twice and have 20 to 1 leverage of funding
- Increased and more secure funding for conservation districts and SCC staffing – eg regional people to assist districts

### **Training & Services:**

- Implementing a district supervisors training program
- Have regional SCC offices

From these ideas, six *Lines of Business* were identified. They are:

- 1. District high Priority Conservation Needs and Projects**
- 2. State Water Laws**
- 3. District Supervisor Training, Recruitment & Retention**
- 4. Promote & Develop Partnerships**
- 5. Statewide Outreach & Marketing**
- 6. Regional Support**

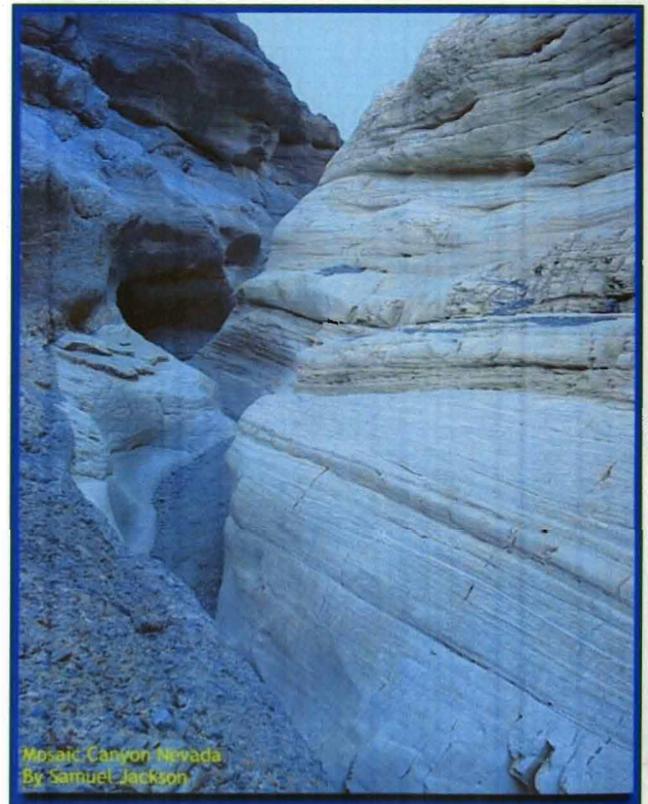
### **Strategic Priorities:**

- **District High Priority Conservation Needs and Projects** – collection of road map of ready to go projects including significant detail including location, cost, timelines, partnerships needed, funding potential outside the state legislature
  - Measure - # of projects identified, planned, implemented & # of district participating
- **State Water Laws** – input by SCC and CDs on water laws, regulations and impact on conservation plans and efforts
  - Measure impact on water legislation & implementation, water resources trend data
- **District Supervisor Training, Recruitment & Retention** – needs assessment (identifying and prioritizing), training for district supervisors, sharing accomplishments, examples and lessons learned in district operations, district supervisor recruitment, and project planning & implementation
  - Measure # of districts with full boards of enthusiastic, engaged, knowledgeable and trained supervisors

- **Promote & Develop Partnerships** – for funding, staffing, projects, funding workshops for districts
  - Measure - # of projects with partners, funding & staff resources shared, partner participation
- **Statewide Outreach & Marketing** – sharing accomplishments, leverage of on dollars, and needs with key audiences
  - Measure - Expanded knowledge of districts and SCC with key audiences, relationship & utilization of media sources & social networking (local, state)
- **Regional Support** – work toward regional staff support for districts
  - Measure – staff & presence -

**Continued Activities and Goals from the previous planning session include:**

- Develop a short, concise video on Nevada’s natural resource issues and culture, marketing through hunting groups, off-highway recreation groups, farmers, realtors, government agencies, schools, developers, etc.
- Continual contact with Nevada Legislators addressing who the State Conservation Commission (SCC) and conservation districts (CD) are, what they represent, the significance of their programs to their constituents.
- Encourage uniformity statewide in district annual reports, annual plans and long-range plans by developing templates that enable ease of input and highlight district accomplishments. Annual reports will be used to develop a statewide report for distribution to Nevada Legislators, partners and the general public.
- Develop a conservation toolbox for districts use. Example contents – brochures, video, fact sheets, resource manuals, CD supervisor handbook, Open Meeting Law information, hunter information, conservation easement program, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), assistance and information contacts, etc.
- Pursue implementation of a fee program (\$10 or more) on all mortgage transactions to fund a competitive grant program for districts. Program to be administered by the SCC.
- Develop strategies and programs for recruiting and training supervisors.
- Pursue a federal earmark, supporting additional staff for implementation of programs with CDs to battle noxious weeds, implement sage grouse habitat improvements, water quality and quantity projects, and other natural resource concerns for conservation district implementation through the SCC.



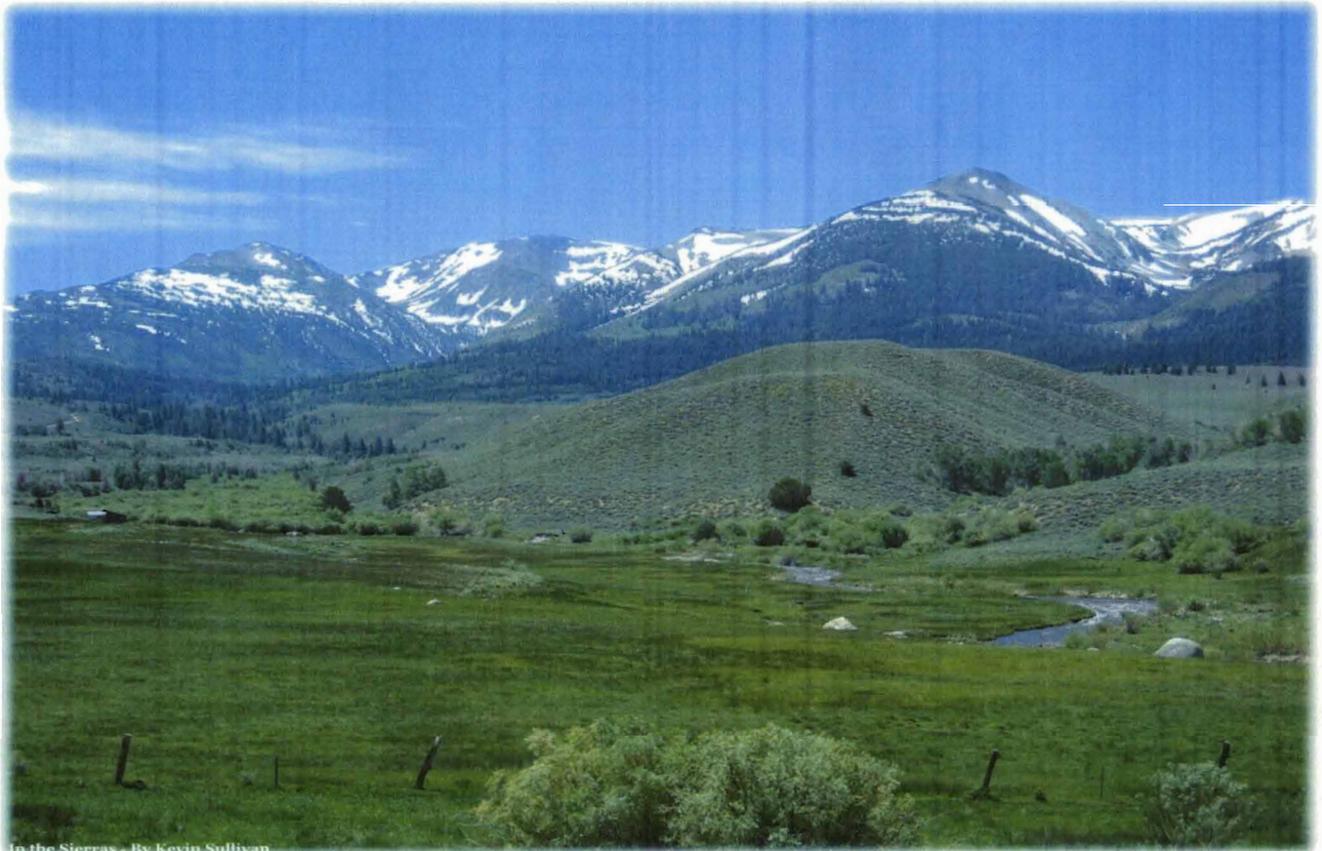
*"The value of a man should be seen in what he gives and not in what he is able to receive." -*

**Albert Einstein**

## **ACTION PLAN:**

To achieve the goals identified by the commission, an action plan was developed that identifies specific tasks and timelines. The action plan is also categorized under each *Line of Business*. The Action Plan includes a description of the desired outcome and how it will be measured, the strategy(ies) for achieving the outcome, measurable objectives, partners and other involved stakeholders as well as timelines and resources required to complete the tasks. To ensure the success of this plan, the commission plans to address progress at each commission meeting if possible and between meetings when feasible. Acknowledging it is especially difficult for volunteers with limited time to spend on commission business and a commission with **limited staff** to implement their goals, the commission realized that without an action plan, the strategic plan becomes difficult to implement.

*"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." - John F. Kennedy*



In the Sierras - By Kevin Sullivan

**District High Priority Conservation Needs and Projects** – collection of a road map of ready to go projects including significant detail including location, cost, timelines, partnerships needed, funding potential outside the state legislature.

**Measure** - # of projects identified, planned, implemented & # of district participating

**Goal:** By November 2014, 2/3 of Nevada CDs will have identifiable projects and 1/3 of them are being implemented or in process.

**Benchmarks, Timeline, Actions:**

Benchmark	Timeline	Actions & Person Responsible
<b>Develop a project template</b>	In 60 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CD/SCC staff</li> </ul>
<b>Request project information form CDs and submit template</b>	6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SCC staff will request information</li> <li>▪ CDs will fill out and return for all projects</li> </ul>
<b>Develop and enter into data base</b>	In 60 days & within one week of receipt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop database – NV Lands Division assistance</li> <li>▪ SCC staff enter data</li> </ul>
<b>Match with funding</b>	As available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Partners and staff</li> </ul>
<b>Solicit funding from partners</b>	1 year continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Partners and staff</li> </ul>
<b>Measure success</b>	2-3 times a year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review at SCC meetings</li> </ul>

**State Water Laws** – input by SCC and CDs on water laws, regulations and impact on conservation plans and efforts

**Measure** - impact on water legislation & implementation, water resources trend data

**Goal:** By November 2014 have a demonstrated increase input by SCC and CD's on water laws, regulations and impact on conservation plans and efforts

**Benchmarks, Timeline, Actions:**

Benchmark	Timeline	Actions & Person Responsible
<b>Resolutions from state association</b>	1/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Resolutions put forward from NvACD chair and staff</li> <li>▪ Concept paper developed from resolutions and district input</li> </ul>
<b>Legislation introduced into legislation</b>	5/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Working with state legislators to introduce legislation</li> </ul>
<b>Enforcement of existing water laws</b>	11/2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>
<b>Review of conservation plans</b>	11/2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Request to review conservation plans</li> <li>▪ Review and make comments on conservation plans</li> </ul>



**District Supervisor Training, Recruitment & Retention –**

needs assessment (identifying and prioritizing), training for district supervisors, sharing accomplishments, examples and lessons learned in district operations, district supervisor recruitment, and project planning & implementation

**Measure:** # of districts with full boards of enthusiastic, engaged, knowledgeable and trained supervisors

**Goal:** By November 2014 have a demonstrated increase in number of districts with full boards of enthusiastic, engaged, knowledgeable and trained supervisors

**Benchmarks, Timeline, Actions:**

Benchmark	Timeline	Actions & Person Responsible
<b>Develop (revise/update) CD board training material</b>	11/2010	▪ SCC staff
<b>CD board - prioritize training needs. Conduct training at three board meetings annually</b>	After 11/2010	▪ SCC staff & CD boards
<b>Evaluate viability of consolidation to increase recruitment and retention of board members</b>	By 11/2010	▪ SCC staff / CD board
<b>Hold an annual public meeting to discuss and identify needs with community, producers, and key stakeholders</b>	By 11/2011	▪ CD Board Supervisors

**Promote & Develop Partnerships –** for funding, staffing, projects, funding workshops for districts

**Measure -** # of projects with partners, funding & staff resources shared, partner participation

**Goal:** By November 2014, all districts will be effectively partnered on at least one of their key resource programs

**Benchmarks, Timeline, Actions:**

Benchmark	Timeline	Actions & Person Responsible
Identify potential partners	Spring 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DCD Staff</li> </ul>
Using potential partner list, match contacts with each conservation district	End of 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DCD staff</li> <li>▪ District Supervisors</li> </ul>
50% of districts effectively partnered	2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DCD staff</li> <li>▪ Commission</li> <li>▪ District Supervisors &amp; partnering agencies</li> </ul>
Same as above but 100%	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Same as above</li> </ul>

**Statewide Outreach & Marketing** – sharing accomplishments, leverage of dollars, and needs with key audiences

**Measure** - Expanded knowledge of districts and SCC with key audiences, relationship & utilization of media sources & social networking (local, state)

**Goal:** By November 2014, have every district recognized for at least one project, to a key audience – local, statewide, or national

**Benchmarks, Timeline, Actions:**

Benchmark	Timeline	Actions & Person Responsible
<b>Division / NvACD highlight 1 district quarterly on website</b>	2 by end of FY2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ District staff submission of project highlight</li> <li>▪ NDCD staff uploads to state site with district staff</li> </ul>
<b>5 districts develop webpage per year</b>	Each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ NDCD staff and Bob Conrad – development of transferable template for page</li> </ul>
<b>1 local news article on district project per district</b>	Each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ District staff supervisor writes 1 press release per year. Includes photo, partners, and benefit.</li> </ul>

**Regional Support** – work toward regional staff support for districts

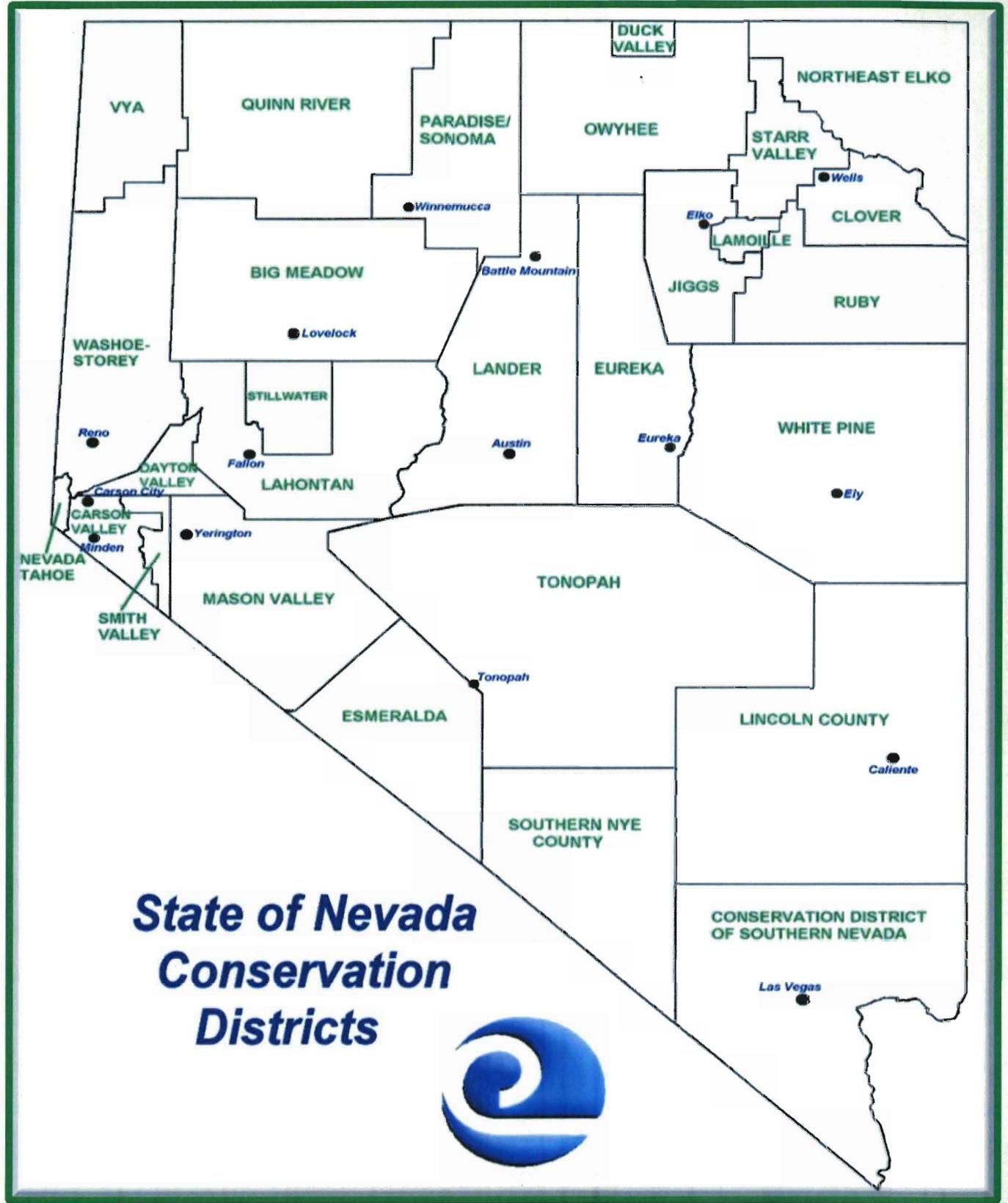
**Measure** – staff & presence

**Goal:** Staff and presence by 2014

**Benchmarks, Timeline, Actions:**

Benchmark	Timeline	Actions & Person Responsible
<b>Ideas and discussion of funding sources</b>	2011 annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Set as agenda item</li> <li>▪ Reports to Commission, Staff &amp; NRCS</li> </ul>
<b>Identify potential funding sources</b>	11/2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Commission – 2 sources per commissioner</li> </ul>
<b>Identify a region of need</b>	11/2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Input from Sandi &amp; Kelly from CDs and Commission / # of required staff / locations</li> </ul>
<b>Staffing and location approval</b>	11/2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Commission will make final regional location &amp; staffing recruitment / approve.</li> </ul>

# NEVADA CONSERVATION DISTRICTS



**State of Nevada  
Conservation  
Districts**



## NEVADA STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION



<b>Chairman - Joe Sicking</b> Paradise/Sonoma CD PO Box 39 Paradise Valley, NV 89426	(775) 578-2244 cell-(775) 427-3234	6/30/2011	Area 1
	<a href="mailto:Email-sickings@hotmail.com">Email-sickings@hotmail.com</a>		
<b>Vice-Chairman Vance Vesco</b> Big Meadow Conservation District PO Box 3855 Winnemucca, NV 89446-3855	(775) 427-8502	6/30/2013	Area 1
	<a href="mailto:Email-vescoranch@hughes.net">Email-vescoranch@hughes.net</a>		
<b>Chris Freeman</b> Nevada Tahoe CD 1260 Conestoga Drive Carson City, NV 89706	(775) 883-2148	6/30/2011	Area 2
	<a href="mailto:Email-ckfre40@aol.com">Email-ckfre40@aol.com</a>		
<b>Eric Rieman</b> Carson Valley Conservation District 750 HWY 395 South Gardnerville, NV 89048	cell- (775) 790-1160	6/30/2013	Area 2
	<a href="mailto:Email:ericrieman@clearwire.net">Email: ericrieman@clearwire.net</a>		
<b>Joseph Fortier</b> CD of Southern Nevada 3543 Nicole Street Las Vegas, NV 89120	(702) 435-6677-H (702) 435-9626-C	6/30/2013	Area 3
	<a href="mailto:Email-fortier@mojave.biz">Email-fortier@mojave.biz</a>		
<b>Donna Lamm</b> Southern Nye Co. CD 421 S. Frontage Rd. Ste#1 Pahrump, NV 89048	(775) 727-4444 Ext. 1 Fax - (775) 727-7071	6/30/2011	Area 3
	<a href="mailto:Email:donnalamm@gmail.com">Email: donnalamm@gmail.com</a> cell - (775) 209-3059		
<b>Leland Wallace (At-Large)</b> Esmeralda Conservation District HC 72 Box 02200 Dyer, NV 89010	(775) 572-3354	6/30/2013	At-Large
	<a href="mailto:Email-haymaker@veawb.coop">Email-haymaker@veawb.coop</a>		
<b>Ed Foster, Regional Manager</b> NV Dept. of Agriculture 405 South 21 <sup>st</sup> Street Sparks, NV 89431	(775) 353-3711		Ex-Officio
	<a href="mailto:Email:efoster@agri.state.nv.us">Email: efoster@agri.state.nv.us</a>		
<b>Dr. Rangesan Narayanan, Assoc Dean</b> UNR College of Agriculture CABNR Mailstop 222 Reno, NV 89557	(775) 784-6649		Ex-Officio
	<a href="mailto:Email-rang@cabnr.unr.edu">Email-rang@cabnr.unr.edu</a>		

**DIVISION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**  
**STAFF CONTACTS**

Nevada Division of Conservation Districts  
901 South Stewart Street, Suite 5004  
Carson City, NV 89701  
Phone: 775-684-2760  
Fax: 775-684-2761

Acting Administrator –  
Jim Lawrence  
775-684-2726  
email: [lawrence@lands.nv.gov](mailto:lawrence@lands.nv.gov)

Program Specialist –  
Kelly McGowan  
775-684-2763  
email: [kmcgowan@dcd.nv.gov](mailto:kmcgowan@dcd.nv.gov)

Program Specialist –  
Sandi Gotta  
775-684-2762  
email: [sgotta@dcd.nv.gov](mailto:sgotta@dcd.nv.gov)

Administrative Assistant –  
Brandi Re  
775-684-2764  
email: [bre@dcd.nv.gov](mailto:bre@dcd.nv.gov)



Desert Big Horn -- In the Valley of Fire near Las Vegas, NV  
Note the Petroglyphs (rock images) above the sheep

Photo by Steve Weaver, Nevada State Parks

**National Conservation Funding Sources 2000**

<i>Location</i>	<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>State Funding to Conservation Districts</i>	<i>Local</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Ranking by State (1=Most \$)</i>
Alabama	00	\$ 4,171,147	\$ 1,161,538	\$ 275,548	\$ 5,608,229	33
Alaska	00	\$ 872,934	\$ 2,387,963	\$ 2,550,896	\$ 5,811,793	48
Arizona	00	\$ 4,208,700	\$ 319,300	\$ 4,616,550	\$ 9,144,550	32
Arkansas	00	\$ 4,253,602	\$ 4,331,075	\$ 484,000	\$ 9,068,677	31
California	00	\$ 38,655,000	\$ 14,384,000	\$ 27,380,000	\$ 80,419,000	6
Colorado	00	\$ 3,441,689	\$ 962,807	\$ 1,204,908	\$ 5,609,404	36
Connecticut	00	\$ 9,337,000	\$ 1,597,500	\$ 424,025	\$ 11,358,525	26
Delaware	00	\$ 13,825,000	\$ 220,000	\$ 175,000	\$ 14,220,000	16
Florida	00	\$ 81,842,808	\$ 9,585,232	\$ 5,700	\$ 91,433,740	2
Georgia	00	\$ 3,757,000	\$ 948,500	\$ 164,000	\$ 4,869,500	36
Hawaii	00	\$ 2,716,000	\$ 424,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 3,190,000	41
Idaho	00	\$ 7,975,720	\$ 327,740	\$ 141,780	\$ 8,445,240	28
Illinois	00	\$ 15,752,525	\$ 5,654,660	\$ 501,270	\$ 21,908,455	14
Indiana	00	\$ 10,927,949	\$ 3,651,388	\$ 1,810,845	\$ 16,390,182	22
Iowa	00	\$ 17,704,683	\$ 1,551,484	\$ 831,028	\$ 20,087,193	13
Kansas	00	\$ 12,745,533	\$ 10,807,873	\$ -	\$ 23,553,406	20
Kentucky	00	\$ 9,888,798	\$ 6,738,160	\$ 944,805	\$ 17,569,763	24
Louisiana	00	\$ 3,206,600	\$ 75,000	\$ 2,000,999	\$ 5,282,599	39
Maine	00	\$ 1,470,822	\$ 400,528	\$ 270,561	\$ 2,141,911	45
Maryland	00	\$ 29,895,524	\$ 13,878,040	\$ 1,222,316	\$ 44,995,880	8
Massachusetts	00	\$ 4,378,684	\$ 81,000	\$ 960,783	\$ 5,420,467	30
Michigan	00	\$ 13,020,000	\$ 2,350,000	\$ 3,595,000	\$ 18,965,000	18
Minnesota	00	\$ 41,288,000	\$ 18,847,000	\$ 400,000	\$ 60,535,000	4
Mississippi	00	\$ 1,290,400	\$ 5,803,771	\$ 202,376	\$ 7,296,547	46
Missouri	00	\$ 33,490,009	\$ 270,000	\$ -	\$ 33,760,009	7
Montana	00	\$ 2,398,063	\$ 1,410,500	\$ 121,000	\$ 3,929,563	42
Nebraska	00	\$ 13,736,978	\$ 54,146,146	\$ 424,126	\$ 68,307,250	17
Nevada	00	\$ 135,000	\$ 802,182	\$ 239,141	\$ 1,176,323	52
New Hampshire	00	\$ 314,993	\$ 422,298	\$ 81,973	\$ 819,264	50
New Jersey	00	\$ 23,983,000	\$ 10,605,000	\$ 5,805,000	\$ 40,393,000	10
New Mexico	00	\$ 1,530,206	\$ 4,141,787	\$ 465,550	\$ 6,137,543	44
New York	00	\$ 12,175,283	\$ 10,607,240	\$ 2,883,200	\$ 25,665,723	21
North Carolina	00	\$ 14,810,918	\$ 9,100,483	\$ 421,755	\$ 24,333,156	15
North Dakota	00	\$ 4,101,842	\$ 4,609,365	\$ 2,001,100	\$ 10,712,307	34
Ohio	00	\$ 9,805,000	\$ 9,882,000	\$ 1,139,000	\$ 20,826,000	25
Oklahoma	00	\$ 10,808,477	\$ 3,018,414	\$ 14,381,615	\$ 28,008,506	23
Oregon	00	\$ 6,283,189	\$ 1,179,457	\$ 347,484	\$ 7,810,130	29
Pacific Basin	00	\$ 285,344	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 285,344	51
Pennsylvania	00	\$ 91,032,720	\$ 22,864,820	\$ 5,818,500	\$ 119,716,040	1
Puerto Rico	00	\$ 12,916,664	\$ 1,194,700	\$ 5,074,200	\$ 19,185,564	19
Rhode Island	00	\$ 1,057,885	\$ 2,922,000	\$ 116,000	\$ 4,095,885	47
South Carolina	00	\$ 2,963,212	\$ 1,727,881	\$ 79,500	\$ 4,770,593	40
South Dakota	00	\$ 2,175,000	\$ 506,000	\$ 520,000	\$ 3,201,000	43
Tennessee	00	\$ 3,519,034	\$ 2,257,966	\$ 401,419	\$ 6,178,419	37
Texas	00	\$ 38,838,502	\$ 9,729,662	\$ 2,753,187	\$ 51,321,381	5
Utah	00	\$ 27,117,574	\$ 23,159,109	\$ 2,466,409	\$ 52,743,092	9
Vermont	00	\$ 3,759,435	\$ 55,200	\$ 1,163,867	\$ 4,978,502	35
Virginia	00	\$ 20,923,614	\$ 168,750	\$ 2,232,333	\$ 23,324,697	12
Washington	00	\$ 23,834,341	\$ 9,807,852	\$ 5,717,279	\$ 39,359,472	11
West Virginia	00	\$ 9,027,528	\$ 599,981	\$ 740,873	\$ 10,368,382	27
Wisconsin	00	\$ 60,560,000	\$ 11,504,900	\$ 611,400	\$ 72,676,300	3
Wyoming	00	\$ 852,000	\$ 2,480,000	\$ 515,000	\$ 3,847,000	49
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 788,661,929</b>	<b>\$ 305,680,280</b>	<b>\$ 108,733,287</b>	<b>\$ 1,181,055,506</b>	<b>1 through 52</b>

\* Ranking determined by level of State Funding allocated to Conservation Districts

## **LIST OF COMMON ACRONYMS:**

<b>AG - Attorney General</b>
<b>BMP – Best Management Practice</b>
<b>BOR - U.S. Bureau of Reclamation</b>
<b>CAFO - Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation</b>
<b>CCPI - Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative</b>
<b>CD – Conservation District</b>
<b>CREP - Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program</b>
<b>CRP - Conservation Reserve Program</b>
<b>DCNR – Department of Conservation and Natural Resources</b>
<b>DEP – Division of Environmental Protection</b>
<b>DM – District Manager</b>
<b>E&amp;S – Erosion &amp; Sediment</b>
<b>EIS - Environmental Impact Statement</b>
<b>EPA - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency</b>
<b>EQIP - Environmental Quality Incentives Program</b>
<b>ESA - Endangered Species Act (Federal)</b>
<b>FEMA - Federal Emergency Management Agency</b>
<b>FERC - Federal Energy Regulatory Commission</b>
<b>FFA - Federal Facilities Agreement</b>
<b>FHWA - Federal Highway Administration</b>
<b>FRPP – Farm and Ranchland Protection Program</b>
<b>FSA – Farm Service Agency</b>
<b>FWS - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service</b>
<b>FY - Fiscal Year</b>
<b>GIS - Geographical Information System</b>
<b>gpd - gallons per day</b>

<b>gpm - gallons per minute</b>
<b>GPS - Global Positioning System</b>
<b>GRP – Grassland Reserve Program</b>
<b>HUC - Hydrologic Unit Code</b>
<b>LID - Low Impact Development</b>
<b>MOU - Memorandum of Understanding</b>
<b>NACD – National Association of Conservation Districts</b>
<b>NDCD - Nevada Division of Conservation Districts</b>
<b>NDCNR - Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources</b>
<b>NDSL - Nevada Division of State Lands</b>
<b>NEPA - National Environmental Policy Act</b>
<b>NM – Nutrient Management</b>
<b>NPDES – National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System</b>
<b>NPS - Nonpoint Source</b>
<b>NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service</b>
<b>NURP - National Urban Runoff Program</b>
<b>NVACD – Nevada Association of Conservation Districts</b>
<b>P.E. - Professional Engineer</b>
<b>PFC - Proper Functioning Condition</b>
<b>PIR - Phosphorus Index Rating or Public Information Request</b>
<b>PL - Public Law</b>
<b>PM - Particulate Matter</b>
<b>PM&amp;E - Protection, Mitigation and Enhancement</b>
<b>QC - Quality Control</b>
<b>RC&amp;D – Resource Conservation &amp; Development</b>
<b>RFP - Request For Proposal</b>

<b>RD - Rural Development</b>
<b>SCC – State Conservation Commission</b>
<b>T&amp;E - Threatened and Endangered (Species)</b>
<b>TDS - Total Dissolved Solids</b>
<b>TMDL - Total Maximum Daily Load</b>
<b>TSP – Technical Service Provider</b>
<b>U.S.C. - U.S. Code</b>
<b>UNCE - University of Nevada Cooperative Extension</b>
<b>UNLV - University of Nevada Las Vegas</b>
<b>UNR - University of Nevada Reno</b>
<b>USACE - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</b>
<b>USBOR - U.S. Bureau of Reclamation</b>

<b>USDA - U.S. Department of Agriculture</b>
<b>USDI - U.S. Department of the Interior</b>
<b>USDOT - U.S. Department of Transportation</b>
<b>USFS - U.S. Forest Service</b>
<b>USFWS - U.S. Fish &amp; Wildlife Service</b>
<b>USGS - U.S. Geological Survey</b>
<b>WHIP - Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program</b>
<b>WHP - Wellhead Protection</b>
<b>WHPP - Wellhead Protection Program</b>
<b>WPCA - Water Pollution Control Act</b>
<b>WQ - Water Quality</b>
<b>WRP - Wetland Reserve Program</b>



*Photo By John E. Walker*