

# Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District (GCRCD)

*An independent special district of the State of California*

888 N. 1st Street, Suite 204, San Jose, CA 95112

Phone: 408-288-5888 Email: [gcrcd@gcrcd.org](mailto:gcrcd@gcrcd.org) Website: [www.gcrcd.org](http://www.gcrcd.org)

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## FY 2021-22 Annual Work Plan Approved December 2, 2021

### **Background:**

California law<sup>1</sup> provides for the “organization and operation of resource conservation for the purposes of:

- soil and water conservation;
- the control of runoff;
- the prevention and control of soil erosion, and erosion stabilization, including, but not limited to, these purposes in open areas, agricultural areas, urban development, wildlife areas, recreational developments;
- watershed management;
- the protection of water quality and water reclamation;
- the development of storage and distribution of water; and
- the treatment of each acre of land according to its needs.”

To address the full range of soil and related resource concerns that are found to occur within the district, resource conservation districts (RCD) may develop long range plans (LRP). The LRP serves the following functions:

- Identification of resource issues within the district for purposes of local, state, and federal resource conservation planning.
- Establishment of long-range district goals.
- Provision of a framework for directors to identify priorities for annual district activities.
- Provision of information to federal, state, and local governments and the public concerning district programs and goals.
- Setting forth a basis for evaluating annual work plan achievements and allocating available state funding to the district.
- Involvement of other agencies and organizations in the district planning process in order to help ensure support in implementing district plans.

In support of long range planning, RCDs may also develop annual work plans (AWP) to prioritize activities. GCRCD’s AWP identifies the planned activities for the goals and strategies set forth in the LRP, as well as their anticipated source(s) of funding. The General Fund (GF) is primarily funded with property taxes, but also may include funding from grants, agreements, sponsorships, donations, and other miscellaneous funding sources, some of which may be identified separately in the AWP as a funding source. The District also has separate designated funds for certain specific purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Resources Code, Division 9, Chapter 1, Article 1, Section 9001

## **Acronyms Used in this Document**

ACRCD	Alameda County RCD	PG&E	Pacific Gas & Electric
AWP	Annual Work Plan	PSBWF	Peninsula-South Bay Watershed Forum
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection	RCDSC	RCD Santa Cruz
CCI	Carbon Cycle Institute	RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
CCRCD	Contra Costa RCD	SCC	County of Santa Clara
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife	SCCFSA	Santa Clara County Food System Alliance
CNPS	Coyote Watershed Integrated Working Group	SCCFSC	Santa Clara County FireSafe Council
CWPP	Community Wildfire Protection Plan	SCMSN	Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentives Program (NRCS)	SCVHA	Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency
FERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	SCVURPPP	Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program
FSA	Farm Service Agency (USDA)	SCVWD	Santa Clara Valley Water District (now VW)
GBACH	Greater Bay Area Carbon Farming Hub	SFBRWQCB	San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board
GCRCD	Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District	SFPUC	San Francisco Public Utility Commission
GF	GCRCD's General Fund	SJSU	San Jose State University
GWIWG	Guadalupe Watershed Integrated Working Group	SMC	County of San Mateo
LPRCD	Loma Prieta Resource Conservation District	SMRCD	San Mateo RCD
LRP	Long Range Plan	SSCCFD	South Santa Clara County Fire District
LWG	Local Work Group	UCCE	University of California Cooperative Extension
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement	USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding	VW	Valley Water (formerly SCVWD)
MROSD	Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District	WMA	Weed Management Area
NCSAF	Northern California Society of American Foresters	WMI-LUS	Watershed Management Initiative-Land Use Subcommittee
NGO	Non-governmental organization		
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service		
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA)		

## **Document Format**

The AWP is designed with a separate table for each area of strategic focus that was identified in the LRP. Each table contains the LRP goals and strategies, the planned activities for each strategy, and the anticipated funding source for those activities.

**Areas of Strategic Focus**

**A. Agricultural Lands**

*Goal: Preserve agricultural lands by providing producers and land managers with access to best management practices and technical assistance so they may maintain economically viable enterprises while preserving soil health, enhancing crop diversity, and protecting natural resources.*

Agricultural Lands: Strategies	Planned Activities (Funding Sources)
1. Provide education and technical assistance to agricultural producers to encourage and enable them to develop and implement conservation plans using NRCS conservation practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Respond to requests for post-disaster and other technical assistance from agricultural producers and landowners (SMRCD; CalRecycle; GF).</li> <li>b. Collaborate with the NRCS Hollister Service Center to provide education and technical assistance to urban farmers (GF).</li> </ul>
2. Provide educational resources to those living and working in urban areas regarding the value of agriculture in contributing to local economies and maintaining healthy ecosystems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop partnerships with other organizations engaged with urban residents and workers (GF).</li> <li>b. Seek grant opportunities to continue partnering on projects with Veggielution Community Farm (GF).</li> <li>c. Implement the San Jose Community Composting Project, in collaboration with the San Jose Conservation Corps and Valley Verde (USDA-NRCS; GF)</li> </ul>
3. Identify opportunities for agricultural producers to develop and implement carbon farm plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Complete carbon farm plan for Veggielution Community Farm (GF).</li> </ul>
4. Provide a venue for agricultural producers and their representative associations to provide input on natural resource concerns and strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Co-host annual NRCS-RCD LWG meeting per the NRCS-GCRCD MOA (GF).</li> <li>b. Hold a second focus group meeting for agricultural producers regarding the County’s working lands climate action program (SMC).</li> <li>c. Hold an outreach event for agricultural producers impacted by natural disasters (SMRCD).</li> </ul>

Agricultural Lands: Strategies	Planned Activities (Funding Sources)
5. Partner with other involved agencies on planning and implementation activities identified in the Santa Clara Valley Agricultural Plan.	a. Participate in stakeholder meetings and identify opportunities for partnerships with lead agencies (GF).
6. Identify potential new market opportunities to better connect agricultural producers to consumers.	a. Participate in local and regional efforts to build connections between agricultural producers and consumers (GF). b. Solicit feedback from urban farmers while implementing the San Jose Community Composting Project and conducting outreach in collaboration with NRCS (USDA-NRCS; GF).
7. Work with CDFW, CDFA, CALFIRE, UCCE and other state, regional and local agencies to address natural resource issues relevant to agricultural producers, including soil health, vegetation management, crop diversity and water quality.	a. Continue to develop partnerships with other agencies to provide education and technical assistance on natural resource issues (GF). b. Continue to provide post-disaster services to agricultural producers (SMRCD; GF).
8. Develop a permit coordination program to assist agricultural producers with project implementation.	a. Develop a funding proposal for development of a permit coordination program (GF).

## B. Biodiversity

*Goal: Promote biodiversity through the conservation and protection of natural habitats and ecosystems that provide a variety of ecosystem services, such as protection of water resources, maintenance of soil health, appropriate nutrient storage, contributions to climate stability, and improved resiliency after natural disasters.*

Biodiversity: Strategies	Planned Activities (Funding Sources)
1. Provide education and technical assistance to watershed stakeholders to maintain healthy and sustainable native plant and wildlife populations.	a. Install gauges and begin monitoring for the Silver Creek Linear Park Wetlands Study, a collaboration with CDFW, SFBRWQB, VW, and City of San Jose (Silver Creek Linear Park Project Designated Fund; GF). b. Identify regional coordination opportunities for wildlife habitat issues (GF).

Biodiversity: Strategies	Planned Activities (Funding Sources)
2. Promote the ecosystem service benefits to working landscapes available to producers through NRCS conservation practices, the CDFA Healthy Soils Program and the Greater Bay Area Regional Carbon Farming Hub.	a. Provide technical assistance to agricultural producers and landowners regarding best management practices to protect soil, water and wildlife (GF).
3. Encourage the maintenance of green infrastructure within urban areas.	a. Consider natural infrastructure when developing the District's signature climate action project (GF).
4. Collaborate with regional partners to develop or improve wildlife linkages and corridors.	a. Continue discussions with regional partners regarding the need to consider wildlife crossings for larger animals, such as Tule elk and puma (GF). b. Host a multi-agency educational meeting for Tule elk habitat issues (GF).
5. Provide a clearinghouse of online resources to assist community members with maintaining and improving beneficial bird and bee habitats.	a. Include a pollinator-specific section on the website's resource page (GF).
6. Collaborate with partners in the Santa Clara County Weed Management Area to provide outreach and education on the importance of removing or controlling invasive species.	a. Cooperate in the development of grant proposals to fund local weed management programs as requested by the WMA (GF).

### C. Water Quality

<i>Goal: Contribute to improvements in water quality available for the benefit of agricultural production, wildlife, and aquatic habitat within District watersheds</i>	
Water Quality: Strategies	Planned Activities (Funding Sources)
1. Provide educational outreach and technical assistance to agricultural producers and land managers on water resource issues impacting soil health, plant communities, and wildlife habitats.	a. Provide Farm & Ranch solid waste cleanup assistance on agricultural land in coordination with the SCC Clean Water Program. (CalRecycle). b. Identify potential partnership opportunities with VW to address agricultural issues affecting water quality (GF).

Water Quality: Strategies	Planned Activities (Funding Sources)
	c. Respond to requests for technical assistance from local farmers and ranchers (SMRCD; GF).
2. Provide technical assistance and financial support to projects affecting District watersheds to improve water quality and reduce erosion and sedimentation.	a. Respond to requests for assistance from constituents, jurisdictions and other agencies dealing with erosion and sedimentation issues (GF). b. Respond to requests for technical assistance and financial support as requested by participating agencies and stakeholders (GF).
3. Encourage producers and communities to develop and implement practices that benefit soil and water resources.	a. Distribute outreach materials regarding best management practices for the protection of soil, water and wildlife (GF). b. Maintain updated resource links on the website (GF).
4. Collaborate with government entities, public land managers, community organizations, homeowners' associations and other watershed stakeholders to maintain and improve working landscapes and soil health to minimize erosion and sedimentation.	a. Provide technical assistance for projects that will minimize erosion and sedimentation on working landscapes (GF). b. Seek funding for the nutrient management program proposal (GF).
5. Provide comments and participate in stakeholder groups addressing existing and proposed programs, projects and designation of land uses that impact District watersheds.	a. Continue to provide comments and participate in stakeholder groups, such as WMI-LUS, GWIWG, CWIWG, AMT, and the Peninsula Watershed Forum (GF).

**D. Fire Risk**

*Goal: Reduce fire risk and natural resource impacts to communities located within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) through rural road, vegetation management, and fuel load reduction programs and projects.*

Fire Risk: Strategies	Planned Activities (Funding Sources)
1. Seek funding for projects identified in the Santa Clara County Community Wildlife Protection Plan (CWPP).	a. Coordinate with the SCCFSC and other partners to identify potential projects to assist with facilitation and/or implementation of the CWPP (GF).

Fire Risk: Strategies	Planned Activities (Funding Sources)
2. Promote the value of using best management practices for rangeland management as a tool for reducing fire risk to agricultural producers and neighboring communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Seek funding to develop a rangeland management component for the CWPP (GF).</li> <li>b. Promote development of grazing opportunities with municipalities and other landowners/managers operating in or near the urban-wildland interface areas (GF).</li> <li>c. Provide post-fire mapping support in the SCU Lightning Complex fire area (GF).</li> </ul>
3. Expand scope of the District's Rural Road program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Seek funding to maintain the rural roads program (GF).</li> </ul>
4. Provide comments and participate in stakeholder groups addressing fire risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Include information about reducing fire risk in presentations and outreach programs (GF).</li> </ul>

#### E. Climate Change

*Goal: Contribute to regional climate change efforts by raising public awareness of the need for individual action, while recognizing and addressing the differences in capacity of individual communities and populations to respond to requests for action.*

Climate Change: Strategies	Planned Activities (Funding Sources)
1. When developing District programs and projects, consider both the environmental and socio-economic impacts of climate change, and work to develop mitigations that accommodate the capacity of the target populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide grant writing technical assistance to local community-based organizations to build their capacity and ability to contribute to achievement of goals shared by the District.</li> <li>b. Develop a signature climate action project for District investment that addresses both the environmental and socio-economic impacts of climate change (GF).</li> </ul>
2. Add consideration of climate change impact as a criterion when considering applications to the District's Community Grant Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Refine the method for rating climate change beneficial impacts in community grant applications (GF).</li> </ul>
3. Promote carbon sequestration through tree planting and re-oaking projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide information on the carbon sequestration benefits of tree planting and re-oaking projects to agricultural producers when providing technical assistance (GF).</li> </ul>
4. Provide public outreach and education on the potential impact of climate change on local wildlife.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop a signature climate action project for District investment (GF).</li> </ul>

Climate Change: Strategies	Planned Activities (Funding Sources)
5. Include climate change impacts and potential adaptations when submitting official comments on programs, projects and land use designations impacting District watersheds.	a. Include climate change impacts and potential mitigations in stakeholder comments (GF).

**F. Public Engagement**

*Goal:* Ensure the public is aware of the role watersheds play in maintaining a healthy and resilient community, and the personal importance of preserving agricultural lands and healthy ecosystems.

Public Engagement: Strategies	Planned Activities (Funding Sources)
1. Seek research and grant administration opportunities to expand the knowledge base within the Santa Clara Basin.	a. Identify funding opportunities to facilitate continued research on natural resource conservation issues (GF).
2. Expand existing outreach and education programs to homeowner associations, community organizations, and educational institutions.	a. Provide grant writing technical assistance to local community-based organizations to build their capacity and ability to contribute to achievement of goals shared by the District. b. Conduct outreach for and provide sponsorships for high school teams to participate in the California Envirothon (GF).
3. Ensure programs and projects provide specific outreach to BIPOC communities and other traditionally underserved populations.	a. Develop programs and projects with input from community organizations within or who provide services to BIPOC communities and other traditionally underserved populations (GF).
4. Make presentations regarding the District's mission, goals and programs to other government entities and regional organizations	a. Include the District's presentation regarding mission, goals and programs on the website (GF). b. Contact government entities and regional organizations regarding making a presentation at one of their Board, Council, Commission or Committee meetings. (GF).
5. Produce outreach materials that can be distributed at events and workshops.	a. Distribute District outreach materials at events and workshops (GF).
6. Develop a backyard conservation program to provide education and technical assistance to landowners living on small acreages.	a. Seek partnership opportunities to develop a backyard conservation program in partnership with other special districts or community organizations (GF).



Public Engagement: Strategies	Planned Activities (Funding Sources)
7. Consider ways to accommodate differences in community cultures and languages when developing website content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Investigate adding translation services to the website (GF).</li> <li>b. Identify opportunities where developing District materials in multiple languages will facilitate educational outreach (GF).</li> </ul>

**G. District Operations**

*Goal: Build and maintain organizational capacity and financial viability to accommodate District mission and goals.*

District Operations: Strategies	Planned Activities (Funding Sources)
1. Seek partnerships and collaborations that will allow the District to leverage available funding to expand scope of projects and programs.	a. Actively seek grants and partnerships to expand District programming and service offerings (GF).
2. Add program support staff to allow for expansion of technical assistance and public outreach programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Add a permanent half-time program manager position, beginning in 2022 (GF).</li> <li>b. Hire a community grant writer to provide technical grant writing assistance to local community-based organizations to build their capacity and ability to contribute to achievement of goals shared by the District (GF).</li> </ul>
3. Develop and implement a fee-for-service program that can be offered to agricultural producers, government entities, and other watershed stakeholders to offset costs of providing technical assistance.	a. Research fee-for-service programs provided by other RCDs (GF).
4. Plan for “shovel-ready” projects and programs so as to be prepared for grant opportunities as they arise.	a. Develop written proposals for programs and projects the District hopes to offer or expand upon when funding becomes available (GF)
5. Utilize existing MOUs with neighboring RCDs for staff support needed to expand scope of projects and programs.	a. Continue discussions with other RCDs and special districts to discuss opportunities to build capacity and leverage staff resources (GF).