

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 Website: www.gcrcd.org

FY 2022-23 Annual Work Plan

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Summary: The Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District ("District") FY 2022-23 Annual Work Plan guides the District's fiscal year planned activities by prioritizing them in alignment with the goals and strategies set forth in the 2019-2023 Long Range Plan, and in consideration of available funding sources.

Background: The enabling authorities for resource conservation districts ("RCDs") are primarily set forth in Division 9 of the California Public Resources Code, which 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."¹

RCDs develop long range plans (LRP) for a variety of purposes, including but not limited to identifying natural resource conservation issues for purposes of local, state, and federal resource conservation planning; establishing long-range goals and strategies; and providing transparency regarding programs and goals to public agencies, community organizations, watershed stakeholders and members of the public. Annual work plans (AWP) are developed to identify planned activities and funding sources in support of the goals and strategies set forth in the LRP. Sources for funding in the AWP may include discretionary funding from property taxes, as well as non-discretionary funding from grants, agreements, sponsorships, donations, and other miscellaneous funding sources. Funding also may be transferred to the general fund (GF) from undesignated and/or designated funds and reserves.

Document Format: This AWP is designed with a separate table for each area of strategic focus included in the District's LRP.² Each table contains LRP goals and strategies, planned activities for each strategy, and existing and potential funding sources activities, including in-kind support. Acronyms are used throughout the document; a reference table appears at the end of the document.

¹ Public Resources Code, Division 9, Chapter 1, Article 1, Section 9001

² 2019-2023 Long Range Plan; https://www.rcdsantaclara.org/files/f9e01b95f/GCRCD_Long-Range-Plan_2019-2024_V.070721.pdf

Strategic Focus Area A: Agricultural Lands

<p><i>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.</i></p>	
Agricultural Lands: Strategies	Planned Activities (Existing and Potential Funding Sources)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide education and technical assistance to agricultural producers to encourage and enable them to develop and implement conservation plans using NRCS conservation practices. • 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. • Identify opportunities for agricultural producers to develop and implement carbon farm plans. • Provide a venue for agricultural producers and their representative associations to provide input on natural resource concerns and strategies. • Partner with other involved agencies on planning and implementation activities identified in the Santa Clara Valley Agricultural Plan. • Identify potential new market opportunities to better connect agricultural producers to consumers. • 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. • Develop a permit coordination program to assist agricultural producers with project implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct outreach to historically underserved farmers and ranchers. (General Fund; NRCS; DOC; CDFA; CARCD) • Coordinate with the new NRCS Urban Agriculture Service Center in Oakland to provide education and technical assistance to urban farmers in the South Bay region. (GF; NRCS; CDFA; NACD) • Assist agricultural producers with conservation practices planning and implementation. (GF; NRCS; CDFA) • Continue implementation of the San Jose Community Composting Project, in collaboration with the San Jose Conservation Corps and Valley Verde. (USDA-NRCS; GF) (GF, Audubon Society) • Continue participation in GBACH. (GF) • Co-host NRCS-RCD LWG and producer focus meetings with LPRCD. (GF) • Coordinate with SCC and other partner agencies to develop activities and outreach that help build awareness about the region’s agriculture and its contribution to a growing local food system. (GF) • Continue to develop public-private partnerships to provide education and technical assistance on natural resource issues. (GF)

Strategic Focus Area B: Biodiversity

<p><i>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.</i></p>	
Biodiversity: Strategies	Planned Activities (Funding Sources)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide education and technical assistance to watershed stakeholders to maintain healthy and sustainable native plant and wildlife populations. • 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. • Encourage the maintenance of green infrastructure within urban areas. • Collaborate with regional partners to develop or improve wildlife linkages and corridors. • Provide a clearinghouse of online resources to assist community members with maintaining and improving beneficial bird and bee habitats. • Collaborate with partners in the Santa Clara County Weed Management Area to provide outreach and education on the importance of removing and controlling invasive species. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue monitoring for the Silver Creek Linear Park Wetlands Study, a collaboration with CDFW, SF Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, VW, and City of San Jose. (Silver Creek Linear Park Project Designated Fund; GF) • Complete the Tule elk habitat suitability project and publish the results. (GF) • Begin implementation of the Los Gatos Watershed Restoration project. (WCB, SBCCC, SJW, GF). • Explore a joint application with LPRCD for a CDFA HSP/SWEEP block grant. (GF) • Continue participation in WMI-LUS. (GF) • Host a rancher workshop to present research results and seek input on Tule elk habitat issues. (GF) • Update resource links on the District’s website and share via the NextDoor platform. (GF)

Continued on Next Page

Strategic Focus Area 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)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide educational outreach and technical assistance to agricultural producers and land managers on water resource issues impacting soil health, plant communities, and wildlife habitats. • Provide technical assistance and financial support to projects affecting District watersheds to improve water quality and reduce erosion and sedimentation. • Encourage producers and communities to develop and implement practices that benefit soil and water resources. • 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. • Provide comments and participate in stakeholder groups addressing existing and proposed programs, projects and designation of land uses that impact District watersheds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to coordinate with the SCC Clean Water Program to provide technical assistance on agriculturally zoned lands under the Farm and Ranch Solid Waste Cleanup and Abatement Program. (GF; CalRecycle) • Respond to requests for technical assistance and financial support from agricultural producers, constituents, municipalities, and other agencies dealing with erosion and sedimentation issues. (GF) • Seek funding for the nutrient management program proposal. (GF) • Provide comments and participate in stakeholder groups, such as WMI-LUS, GWIWG, AMT, One Water, and PSBWF. (GF) • Develop outreach materials regarding best management practices for the protection of soil, water and wildlife. (GF)

Continued on Next Page

Strategic Focus Area D: Fire Risk

<p><i>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.</i></p>	
Fire Risk: Strategies	Planned Activities (Funding Sources)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek funding for projects identified in the Santa Clara County Community Wildlife Protection Plan (CWPP). • Promote the value of using best management practices for rangeland management as a tool for reducing fire risk to agricultural producers and neighboring communities. • Expand the scope of the District’s Rural Road program. • Provide comments and participate in stakeholder groups addressing fire risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the CWPP update as a member of Advisory Team. (GF) • Coordinate with the SCCFSC and other partners to identify potential fire risk mitigation projects. (GF) • Develop a GCRC D annex and/or grazing management module for the CWPP. (GF) • Promote development of grazing opportunities with municipalities and other landowners/managers operating in or near the urban-wildland interface areas. (GF)

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Strategic Focus Area E: Climate Change

<p><i>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.</i></p>	
Climate Change: Strategies	Planned Activities (Funding Sources)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Add consideration of climate change impact as a criterion when considering applications to the District’s Community Grant Program. • Promote carbon sequestration through tree planting and re-oaking projects. • Provide public outreach and education on the potential impact of climate change on local wildlife. • Include climate change impacts and potential adaptations when submitting official comments on programs, projects and land use designations impacting District watersheds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Continue partnership with the City of San Jose to implement the ZEN Pilot Project. (GF) • Develop tree planting activities through the ZEN Pilot Project. (GF) • Conduct outreach to ranchers to identify oak planting opportunities. (GF) • Publish results of the regional Tule elk habitat suitability analysis. (GF) • Include climate change impacts and potential mitigations in stakeholder comments (GF).

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Strategic Focus Area F: Public Engagement

<p><i>Goal:</i> 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.</p>	
Public Engagement: Strategies	Planned Activities (Funding Sources)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek research and grant administration opportunities to expand the knowledge base within the Santa Clara Basin. 2. Expand existing outreach and education programs to homeowner associations, community organizations, and educational institutions. 3. Ensure programs and projects provide specific outreach to BIPOC communities and other traditionally underserved populations. 4. Make presentations regarding the District’s mission, goals and programs to other government entities and regional organizations. 5. Produce outreach materials that can be distributed at events and workshops. 6. Develop a backyard conservation program to provide education and technical assistance to landowners living on small acreages. 7. Consider ways to accommodate differences in community cultures and languages when developing website content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and provide workshops for the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy and ReScape as provided in their VW grant agreements. • Identify funding opportunities to facilitate continued research on resource conservation issues. (SCVHA; GF) • 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. (GF) • Conduct outreach for and provide sponsorships for high school teams to participate in the California Envirothon. (GF) • Solicit input from traditionally underserved populations when developing relevant programs and projects. (GF) • Solicit opportunities to make presentations to other government entities and regional organizations. (GF) • Develop a District brochure and translate into at least one other language. (GF) • Identify a service or application that will allow visitors to the website to translate content into another language.

Continued on Next Page

Strategic Focus Area G: District Operations

<i>Goal: Build and maintain organizational capacity and financial viability to accommodate District mission and goals.</i>	
District Operations: Strategies	Planned Activities (Funding Sources)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek partnerships and collaborations that will allow the District to leverage available funding to expand scope of projects and programs. • Add program support staff to allow for expansion of technical assistance and public outreach programs. • 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. • Plan for “shovel-ready” projects and programs so as to be prepared for grant opportunities as they arise. • Utilize existing MOUs with neighboring RCDs for staff support needed to expand scope of projects and programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement rebranding and outreach program for District name change. • Actively seek grants and partnerships to expand District programming and service offerings. (GF) • Contract for financial administrative support. • Develop a cost allocation program to determine cost of providing services to use to develop fee schedule. (GF) • Continue discussions with other RCDs and special districts to discuss opportunities to build capacity and leverage staff resources (GF).

Continued on Next Page

Acronyms Used in this Document

ACRCD	Alameda County RCD	NACD	National Association of Conservation Districts
AWP	Annual Work Plan	NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
CAL FIRE	CA Department of Forestry and Fire Protection	PSBWF	Peninsula-South Bay Watershed Forum
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife	SCC	County of Santa Clara
CWPP	Community Wildfire Protection Plan	SCCFSC	Santa Clara County FireSafe Council
GBACH	Greater Bay Area Carbon Farming Hub	SCVHA	Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency
GCRCD	Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District	SJW	San Jose Water Company
GF	General Fund	SWEEP	State Water & Efficiency Enhancement Program
GWIWG	Guadalupe Watershed Integrated Working Group	UCCE	University of California Cooperative Extension
HSP	Healthy Soils Program	USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
LPRCD	Loma Prieta Resource Conservation District	VW	Valley Water
LRP	Long Range Plan	WCB	CA Wildlife Conservation Board
LWG	Local Work Group	WMA	Santa Clara County Weed Management Area
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement	WMI	Watershed Management Initiative
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding	WMI-LUS	WMI-Land Use Subcommittee

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