

**EAGLE COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**



LONG RANGE PLAN

2014 - 2017



Eagle County Conservation District 3-Year Plan (2014-2017) Executive Summary

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Organization of the Eagle County Conservation District

The Eagle County Conservation District was organized according to the Colorado Soil Conservation Act and is a legal subdivision of the State of Colorado. The certificate of organization was issued by the Colorado Secretary of State on November 13, 1950 and was approved by the Secretary of Agriculture on April 5, 1951.

The District governing board is composed of a seven member board of supervisors. The election, qualifications, term of office and duties shall be provided in Section 35-70-101 through 35-70-121 of the Soil Conservation Act and as provided in the Eagle County Conservation District by-laws. Sixty-six percent of the board must be actively engaged in agriculture. The Eagle County Extension Agent and Eagle County Weed and Pest manager serve as an ex-officio members of the Board.

Function of the Eagle County Conservation District

To make available technical, financial and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land manager with conservation of soil, water and related natural resources.

Mission Statement

“Promoting the preservation and restoration of the natural resources of the District through education, cooperation, and initiation of practices that fulfill these goals.”

Trends Impacting Conservation in the Eagle County Conservation District

The most significant trend impacting the District is the continual, commercial and residential development of both agricultural and forested lands. This growth raises concerns of proper use of natural resources, mainly water, as well as fire mitigation and forest health due to the extensive pine beetle infestation. There are also many new and existing acreage owners who are unaware of conservation issues such as water use, noxious weeds and soil erosion. Many of these land owners are only part year residents whose land beyond the lawn and flowers is completely unattended to.

Natural Resource Data – Area Description

The District Contains all of Eagle County except that portion of the County south of the divide which separates the drainage area of the Eagle River and its tributaries and Cottonwood Creek from the drainage area of the Fryingpan and Roaring Fork Rivers and their tributaries. It also includes the Sweetwater community in Garfield County and the lower Sheephorn community and Radium community in Grand County. The Continental Divide bounds the southeast corner of the District with the Gore Range completing the east side.

Approximate Acreage Breakdown	
US Forest Service	593,780
Bureau of Land Management	261,271
Private Land	230,323
State Land	5,429

Of the approximate 230,320 acres of private land, the land use consists of the following:

Rangeland	126,692
Woodland	64,807
Irrigated Pasture and Hayland	18,750
Non-irrigated Pasture and Hayland	8,000
Wildlife Land	10,000
Urban	9,000
Water	3,2000
Highways and Roads	6,397
Railroads	1,527

The topography of the District varies from gently sloping valley bottoms and high rolling mesas to steep timbered and Rocky Mountains. The elevation varies from 6000 feet on the lower Colorado River to the 14,000 foot peaks in the east range.

The soils are predominantly of medium texture. They are derived from sandstone, shale, gypsum and igneous rocks. They range in depth from shallow to deep. The valley soils which are being irrigated are alluvial in origin. They are generally moderately deep and quite productive. The soils on the slopes are generally deep with many stones on the surface and mixed in with the soil. The soils are derived from gypsum and are highly erodible and generally have low productivity.

The raising of livestock and irrigated farming are the most important agricultural ventures within the district. The average length of the growing season at Eagle is 85 days. The frost-free period is even shorter at some higher elevations and limits the variety of crops to those adapted to short seasons.

Natural Resource Priorities and Goals

Noxious Weeds

Goal: Increase awareness and cooperation between private land owners/managers, county officials and public land managers (BLM and USFS) to control noxious weeds.

Consistent enforcement of existing laws and regulations regarding noxious weeds.

Objective A: Work with and educate local, private landowners and managers.

Objective B: Increase effectiveness of partnership with Eagle County officials.

Water Quality and Quantity

Goal: Work to ensure best irrigation practices are used on agricultural lands. Control/minimize impact caused by development. Have plans in place to minimize and mitigate issues caused by natural occurrences or disasters.

- Objective A: Educate and increase awareness of water quality and quantity issues.
Work to improve Irrigation Water Management (IWM) practices.
- Objective B: Work to improve water quality through reduction or management of sediments.

Land Use

- Goal: Create and maintain a better balance between developments, wildlife, agriculture, public use, and open space lands.
 - Objective A: Develop a better relationship with planning and easement officials. Review land use applications and promote conservation practices.
 - Objective B: Maintain soil and water conservation and aesthetics of open space through effective re-vegetation.

Natural Resource Information/Education Priorities and Goals

- Goal 1: Develop awareness and knowledge among students and educators regarding natural resources and local challenges.
 - Objective A: Increase water trailer demonstrations at schools, public events and the County Fair
 - Objective B: Increase awareness of scholarships available for continuing education after high school in the fields of agriculture or conservation.
 - Objective C: Continue work with Walking Mountains School to provide conservation education opportunities throughout the summer months.
- Goal 2: Educate landowners and general public about conservation issues in the District.
 - Objective A: Co-Sponsor workshops and seminars addressing local conservation issues and better practices.
 - Objective B: Promote and attend workshops in neighboring counties.
 - Objective C: Host a pastureland reseeding workshop.
 - Objective D: Publish newsletter twice yearly with informative articles and to promote workshops and programs.
 - Objective E: Host Bus Tour to showcase completed and in progress conservation projects.
 - Objective F: Public Service Announcements on ECOtv with informational ads, interviews re: conservation, weed control, etc.

Additional Conservation Activities

In addition to the goals and objectives stated in this Long Range Plan, the Board will also pursue the additional goals included in the current Annual plan. Some examples of this (from the 2014 Annual Plan) include:

- Objective A: Pursue advertisers for the newsletter and website to offset costs.
- Objective B: Maintain the website, making all ECCD activities, programs, etc. available to all interested landowners.
- Objective C: Reach out to local 4H organization to explore possible partnerships.
- Objective D: Investigate the appropriate role of ECCD in pine beetle control efforts.
- Objective E: Explore other potential partnerships and available grants to increase quality and quantity of ECCD programs and benefit to the community.

Staffing Needs

The Board is prepared to accomplish the goals and objectives stated in this Long Range Plan with the aid of one very part time (8 hours/week) District Manager. However, the District will pursue funding to enable the District Manager to be paid for 15-20 hours per week to increase our efficiency and the quality of our planned programs. The district will also pursue funding to “share” a summer weed intern already funded by neighboring Districts.

Operational Goals and Objectives

Goal: To effectively pursue mission statement and become a recognized and valued entity within our community.

Objective A: The members of this board vary widely in their ages, experiences and personal philosophies regarding natural resources and need to educate each other in different aspects of conservation.

Objective B: Encourage use of presentations offered on the State web site.

Objective C: Attend and learn from co-sponsored local seminars as well as those held in neighboring districts.

Objective D: Pursue additional funding from Eagle County and available grants for additional staff and community programs.

EAGLE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Natural Resource Goals & Objectives

Long Range Plan for: 2014 – 2017

Natural Resource Issue: Noxious Weeds

Why is this issue a concern and what is the location: Noxious weeds compete with desirable and native plants for natural resources, and can sicken livestock. They negatively impact both wildlife habitats and agricultural lands. A general lack of awareness among the general public, local governments, tourists and landowners, (especially first time land owners) results in continued spread of these invasive plants.

Three Year Goal(s): Increased awareness and cooperation between private land owners/managers, county officials and public land managers (BLM and Forest Service) to control noxious weeds, as well as consistent enforcement of existing laws and regulations regarding noxious weeds.

PROGRAM YEAR	MEASURABLE ANNUAL OBJECTIVES	COOPERATING AGENCY/GROUP	TIME AND FUNDING NEEDED	SOURCE OF FUNDING
1 st Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Incorporate weed information into seminars and workshops B. Work with County officials to secure additional funding for cost share programs. C. Secure grant money for next year 	Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS,) Eagle County Integrated Pest Management (ECIPM,) Land Owners	100 hours \$12100 in cash \$1300 in kind	Eagle County Conservation District (ECCD)
2 nd Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Continuation of above B. Continuation of above C. Advertise and administer Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB) grant money for noxious weed cost share program. D. Secure grant money for next year 	CSCB, NRCS, ECIMP, Eagle County Commissioners, Land owners	200 Hrs \$15000 in cash \$1600 in kind	CSCB, ECCD, NRCS, ECIPM, Eagle County
3 rd Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Continuation of above B. Continuation of above C. Continuation of above and focus additional efforts on identified problem areas. D. Secure grant money for next year 	CSCB, NRCS, ECIMP, Eagle County Commissioners, Land owners	250 Hrs \$17500 in cash \$1800 in kind	CSCB, ECCD, NRCS, ECIPM, Eagle County

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Natural Resource Goals & Objectives

Long Range Plan for: 2014 – 2017

Natural Resource Issue: Water Quality and Quantity

Why is this issue a concern and what is the location: Water is a limited resource and is greatly impacted by increasing populations and development as well as natural occurrences such as seasonal runoff and potential disasters such as forest fires and flooding. Without management, the water quantity and quality for agriculture, recreation/tourism and wildlife habitats will suffer.

Three Year Goal(s): Work to ensure best irrigation practices are used on agricultural lands. Control/minimize impact caused by development. Have plans in place to minimize and mitigate issues caused by natural occurrences or disasters

PROGRAM YEAR	MEASURABLE ANNUAL OBJECTIVES	COOPERATING AGENCY/GROUP	TIME AND FUNDING NEEDED	SOURCE OF FUNDING
1 st Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Work with and encourage land owners to seek advice and assistance from the NRCS office. B. Increase involvement with the Eagle River Watershed Alliance (ERWA) aiding in their efforts to map problem areas along the Eagle River and Upper Colorado. C. Increase outreach to students and youth through cooperation with local schools and use of the water trailer. D. Investigate strategies to handle potential runoff sediment following a forest fire and annual runoff. 	NRCS, ERWA, Pitkin and Garfield County Conservation Districts, Landowners, BLM, Forest Service	300 Hrs \$600 in cash \$9000 in kind	ECCD
2 nd Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Continuation of above. B. Work with landowners and county to improve issues identified by the ERWA and seek funding/grants. C. Continuation of above. D. Implement programs as needed to handle sediment issues. 	NRCS, ERWA, Pitkin and Garfield County Conservation Districts, Landowners, BLM, Forest Service	350 Hrs \$700 in cash \$?? Grant \$10500 in kind	ECCD, ERWA, Possible grants and donations
3 rd Year	A .thru E. Continuation of above	NRCS, ERWA, Minturn Middle School, Pitkin and Garfield County Conservation Districts, Landowners, BLM, Forest Service	350 Hrs \$700 in cash \$?? Grant \$10500 in kind	ECCD, ERWA, Possible grants and donations

EAGLE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Natural Resource Goals & Objectives

Long Range Plan for: 2014 – 2017

Natural Resource Issue: Land Use

Why is this issue a concern and what is the location: Wildlife habitats and open space being negatively impacted by golf courses, new homes and other land development occurring without proper consideration for waterways, best land use and conservation practices.

Three Year Goal(s): Better balance of development with wildlife habitat, agriculture, public use and open space

PROGRAM YEAR	MEASURABLE ANNUAL OBJECTIVES	COOPERATING AGENCY/GROUP	TIME AND FUNDING NEEDED	SOURCE OF FUNDING
1 st Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Increase awareness and support of agricultural community and conservation issued through workshops and distributed information. B. Review proposed developments and provide appropriate feedback. C. Promote conservation through planting seedling trees and reseeding pasture land and other disturbed soils. 	CSU Extension, Farm Service, NRCS, BLM, Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), Eagle County officials	200 hrs \$800 in cash \$4000 in kind	ECCD, CSU Extension
2 nd Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Increase quality and quantity of above. B. Develop a better relationship with local developers and County officials. C. Continuation of above 	CSU Extension, Farm Service, NRCS, BLM, Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), Eagle County officials	250 hrs \$1000 in cash \$5000 in kind	ECCD, CSU Extension
3 rd Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Through C. Continuation of above. 	CSU Extension, Farm Service, NRCS, BLM, Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), Eagle County officials	250 hrs \$1200 in cash \$5000 in kind	ECCD, CSU Extension

RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION

THEREFORE, Be It Resolved that this Long Range Program of the Eagle County Conservation District be adopted as the official program of the District as of this _____ day of _____, 2014.

Scott Jones, President

Mike Devins, Vice President

Katie Langdon, Secretary

Wendy Sacks, Treasurer

Corky Fitzsimons, Member

Scott Schlosser, Member

Scott Griffin, Member

Reviewed by the Colorado State Conservation Board

Jack Burk, President

Cindy Lair, Program Manager

Date