



CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
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South Yakima Conservation District



Annual Work Plan for 2025

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Table of Contents

Mission	3
Natural Resource Priorities.....	3
Natural Resource Programs	6
Water Quantity and Irrigation Water Management	6
Water Quality, Nutrient Management, and Livestock	8
Soil Health.....	8
Energy Conservation, Carbon Sequestration, and Greenhouse Gas Reduction	9
Habitat Restoration and Enhancement	10
Noxious Weeds	11
District Programs	12
District Operations	12
Education and Outreach.....	13
Budget.....	15
Acronyms and Abbreviations	15

Mission

South Yakima Conservation District's mission is to promote and assist all landowners with the wise use, development, and conservation of our renewable natural resources.

Natural Resource Priorities

Water Quantity and Irrigation Water Management

Irrigation water conversions to prevent soil & water runoff, inefficient water use, inadequate water storage, and inadequate water supply.

Is this a state and/or regional priority along with being a local priority? Yes. While many of the valley's landowners have converted to more efficient irrigation systems, many smaller landowners have old and/or inefficient systems that are costly to replace. Irrigation water supply and usage is a concern for central and eastern Washington due to reliance on irrigation for farming and low annual precipitation. This is especially an issue during drought years.

Source of data: DOE drought declarations, Bureau of Reclamation's Yakima Basin Integrated Plan

Other entities engaged: Yakima County VSP, NRCS, WSCC, Bureau of Rec's Yakima Basin Integrated Plan, local irrigation districts

Water Quality, Nutrient Management and Livestock

Provide technical assistance to address concerns with excess nutrients in surface and ground waters through surface runoff and leaching into shallow ground waters. Work with livestock producers to create and update nutrient management plans and to address other resource concerns relating to their operations.

Is this a state and/or regional priority along with being a local priority? Yes. Water quality and non-point source pollution are concerns for many parts of the state, including critical aquifer recharge areas such as the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area (GWMA), where there are areas that experience elevated nitrates in the groundwater. Some residents with private wells experience nitrate concentrations at or above the health standard of 10 mg/L. Nitrate in groundwater can come from overapplication of nutrients (including commercial fertilizer), leaking septic systems, geological conditions, etc. Much of SYCD's boundaries are in WRIA 37, where the Yakima River, Granger Drain, Sulphur Creek Wasteway, and Giffin Lake are listed on the Department of Ecology's 303(d) list of impaired water bodies. Addressing nutrient management can help livestock producers and other farmers utilize nutrients responsibly.

In addition, Yakima County has over sixty dairy and livestock facilities with the vast majority located in South Yakima Conservation District's boundary. Other livestock operations can include feedlot operations and grazing operations for pasture and/or rangeland.

Source of data: Yakima County VSP Work Plan (Approved October 2017), Yakima County's GWMA website, local TMDLs, DOE's 303(d) list

Other entities engaged: GWMA, Yakima County VSP, WSDA, WSCC, Yakama Nation, local irrigation districts



Holstein dairy cows feeding

Soil Health

Improve soil health through soil testing, nutrient management, soil moisture monitoring, and scheduling; improve organic matter using direct and no-till seeding; increase production and protect natural resources such as soil, water, and air.

Is this a state and/or regional priority along with being a local priority? Yes. Soil health and sustainability remains a national, state, regional, and local priority and is one of the founding principles for conservation districts and NRCS. Some challenges for soils in the district include low organic matter, alkaline soils, and soil erosion via wind and water.

Source of data: NRCS Web Soil Survey; Soil Survey of Yakima County Area, Washington; WSDA's Washington Soil Health Initiative

Other entities engaged: NRCS, WSDA, WSCC, Yakama Nation

Energy Conservation, Carbon Sequestration, and Greenhouse Gas Reduction

Energy conservation on facilities and in landscape farming and ranching. Assist landowners with implementing BMPs that sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Is this a state and/or regional priority along with being a local priority? Yes. Washington is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving energy, and sequestering carbon to reduce climate change impacts. Switching to more energy-efficient equipment and utilizing best

management practices to reduce carbon footprint helps producers ensure the sustainability of their farms.

Source of data: Climate Commitment Act, Yakima Regional Clean Air Agency

Other entities engaged: WSCC, NRCS, DOE, Yakima Regional Clean Air Agency, local utility companies (incentive programs)

Habitat Restoration and Enhancement

Improve wildlife habitat quality and function through partnership with landowners and agencies.

Is this a state and/or regional priority along with being a local priority? Yes. Yakima County and the Columbia Basin are home to unique shrubsteppe habitat, which is critical for statewide VSP and Yakima County VSP and endangered or threatened species such as sage grouse. Shrubsteppe habitat is affected by fragmentation, development, invasive species, and fire damage. In addition, riparian and salmon habitat remains a priority for the state level and local level. The Yakima River and its tributaries contain listed species and species of concern such as Pacific lamprey, steelhead, bull trout, coho salmon, Chinook salmon, and sockeye salmon.

Source of data: Yakima County VSP Work Plan (Approved October 2017), Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration & Resiliency (WSRRI), BuRec's Yakima Basin Integrated Plan

Other entities engaged: Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group, WDFW, Audubon Society, Yakima County VSP, BuRec's Yakima Basin Integrated Plan, BLM, DNR, WSCC



Drone footage of a riparian restoration project site

Noxious Weeds

Control the growth and spread of noxious weeds.

Is this a state and/or regional priority along with being a local priority? Yes. Noxious weeds threaten both natural habitat by outcompeting native species and agriculture by invading cropland, pasture, rangeland, and other ag lands.

Source of data: Yakima County VSP Work Plan (Approved October 2017), Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board, Yakima County Noxious Weed Control Board

Other entities engaged: Yakima County Noxious Weed Board, Yakima County VSP, WSU Extension, Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board

Natural Resource Programs

Water Quantity and Irrigation Water Management

Goal(s): Promote irrigation conversions to prevent soil and water runoff; improve inefficient water use and inadequate water storage and supply within South Yakima Conservation District boundary.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective(s):

Convert 2-4 surface irrigation systems on 100-500 acres of cropland to more efficient irrigation systems. Promote proper irrigation water management with moisture monitoring by assisting 5-10 landowners annually on approximately 100-250 acres.

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective(s):

Work with all irrigation districts to provide technical assistance and financial assistance if available to irrigation system operators, producers, and landowners. Provide technical assistance to approximately 3-5 landowners resulting in the implementation of 3-5 IWM Plans.

Funding Source(s): WSCC, WSDA, potential future grants

Activities for FY2025	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Maintain contact with Department of Ecology regarding the status of all sediment-impaired water bodies with TMDLs including the Yakima River and tributaries, Granger Drain Fecal Coliform TMDL, and the Sulphur Creek & Lower Yakima Sediment TMDL process. Contact once at minimum.	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah	0.5 0.5	\$351.28	
Participate by hosting or attending at least 2-3 informational webinars/meetings/workshops on Irrigation Water Management (IWM) and new alternative methods and technology in this field.	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah Bailey	30 30	\$21,076.80	

Seek funding for irrigation BMPs/irrigation conversions and distribution efficiency by making contacts and submitting grant proposals. Work with other agencies, public, and affected landowners on Drought Resiliency and IWM.	Ongoing	Rodney Savannah Bailey	10 10	\$7,025.60	
Provide technical assistance for up to 15 producers to emphasize the high priority of resource protection caused by soil erosion and other resource concerns.	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah Bailey	10 10 5	\$8,434.80	
Continue to update landowner IWM assessment questionnaire to determine the level of potential project needs within our district and secure cost-share funding to complete projects.	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah Bailey	10 10 5	\$8,434.80	
Work with 2-12 landowners to install soil moisture monitors on 500 acres utilizing precision new ag technologies, nutrient sampling and Farm Planning, etc.	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah Bailey	12 12 5	\$9,839.92	



Newly-installed irrigation pivot

Water Quality, Nutrient Management, and Livestock

Goal(s): Promote and implement proper nutrient management BMPs within the GWMA and SYCD boundaries to reduce water quality impairments. Assist livestock producers with related resource concerns.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective:

Implement BMPs with interested agricultural producers offering nutrient management systems and plans on irrigated cropland acres.

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective:

Work with 15-20 agricultural producers to implement nutrient management systems and practices on approximately 800 acres annually.

Funding Source(s): WSCC, WSDA

Activities for FY2025	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Provide technical assistance to livestock producers in developing or updating Nutrient Management Plans for livestock and dairy operations and/or Ecology's Manure Pollution Prevention Plan for the NPDES permit.	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah Bailey	60 60 30	\$50,608.80	
Promote Nutrient Management practices through nutrient testing, record keeping, Technical Assistance, and education & outreach.	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah Bailey	40 40 20	\$33,739.20	
Host or co-host 1-2 education & outreach meetings/workshops on Nutrient Management and new alternative BMPs.	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah Bailey	15 15 5	\$11,947.60	

Soil Health

Goal(s): Work with producers on the importance of soil testing, nutrient cycling, cover crops, and improving soil health on cropland acres to maintain other natural resources such as air quality, water quality, and wildlife habitat.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective:

Improve soil quality to reduce runoff, prevent water and wind erosion of soil, improve nutrient efficiencies, and ensure sustainability.

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective:

Provide the use of no-till seed drills through the district rental program to 35-40 landowners on approximately 1000 acres. Discuss the benefits of no-till management and provide technical assistance on other soil health principles.

Funding Source(s): WSCC, local assessment, NRCS, WSDA, potential future grants

Activities for FY2025	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Maintain and provide use of the no-till seed drills to landowners	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah Bailey	10 10 5	\$8,434.80	
Work with producers to promote managing healthy and productive soils through soil testing, cover crops, and other soil health management practices	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah Bailey	15 15 5	\$11,947.60	
Host or co-host an annual meeting covering soil health topics and principles	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah	15 15	\$10,538.40	



SYCD's three no-till seed drills

Energy Conservation, Carbon Sequestration, and Greenhouse Gas Reduction

Goal(s): Assist landowners and producers with practices that help conserve energy, sequester carbon, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective:

Dependent on funding, number of participating producers, practice types, etc.

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective:

Complete at least one or two projects and/or plans each fiscal year to implement related BMPs.

Funding Source(s): WSCC, potential future grants

Activities for FY2025	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Provide technical assistance about Climate Smart Practices through site visits and discussions with producers.	6/30/2026	Savannah Rodney Bailey	15 10 5	9,844	
Complete plans and implement projects utilizing Climate Smart Practices and best available tools.	6/30/2026	Savannah Rodney Bailey	10 10 5	\$8,434.80	



New electric pump for waste transfer after switching from an old diesel-powered PTO pump

Habitat Restoration and Enhancement

Goal(s): Continue expanding programs and partnership with local agencies and organizations to assist landowners with practices that improve fish and wildlife habitat.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective:

Improve riparian, salmon, rangeland, and pollinator habitat on working lands for participating landowners.

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective:

Complete at least one project and/or plan each fiscal year for habitat restoration and enhancement. Provide technical assistance to landowners each year.

Funding Source(s): WSCC, DOE, local assessment, potential future grants

Activities for FY2025	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Meet regularly with Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group about ongoing projects and future opportunities.	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah Bailey	5 5 5	\$4,922	
Attend trainings, webinars, and/or other events for habitat enhancement.	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah Bailey	2 2 2	\$1,968.80	
Provide technical assistance via site visits and other work for potential and ongoing projects.	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah Bailey	10 10 10	\$9,844	



Spring-fed cool pool as part of a riparian habitat restoration project

Noxious Weeds

Goal(s): Continue working with landowners and encouraging the use of herbaceous weed treatment, planting cover crops, and other practices to discourage noxious weeds from establishing.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective:

Reduce the number of acres affected by noxious weeds.

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective:

Provide technical assistance to at least 10 landowners annually.

Funding Source(s): WSCC, local assessment, potential future grants

Activities for FY2025	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Provide technical assistance to landowners on practices that help reduce noxious weeds.	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah	3 3	\$2,107.68	
Attend workshops, trainings, and/or webinars about invasive plant species and noxious weeds.	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah	1 1	\$702.56	

District Programs

District Operations

Goal(s): Provide training and ongoing education to District Staff and Supervisors. Continue to seek appropriate funding to enhance the long range goals of the District. Work with other Districts and agencies to improve program efficiency.

Funding Source(s): WSCC, Local Assessment, Potential Grants

Activities for FY2025	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Coordinate various District activities and programs in a timely manner.	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah	40 40	\$28,102.40	
Complete Internal Audit (Schedule 22) yearly and review at a monthly Board Meeting.	3/30/2026	Supervisors Rodney Trish	0.25 4 8	Volunteer \$3,929.92	
Complete and submit yearly State Auditor's Report	5/30/2026	Supervisors Trish	5 5	Volunteer \$1,404.20	
Supervisors complete at least one training session during year (at WACD or a district's work/training day)	6/30/2026	Supervisors Regional Manager	1	Volunteer Non CD	
Each staff member/supervisor to attend one training session (webinars or workshops)	6/30/2026	Supervisors Rodney Savannah Bailey	1 1 1 1	Volunteer \$983.44	
Review Annual Work Plan a minimum of twice per year.	6/30/2026	Supervisors Rodney	0.25 1	Volunteer \$702.56	

		Savannah	1		
Review Long Range Plan yearly and update as necessary	6/30/2026	Supervisors Rodney Savannah Trish	0.25 0.25 0.25 0.25	Volunteer \$245.86	
Coordinate with other Conservation Districts and NRCS to enhance program efficiencies by attending at least one Local Work Group meeting.	4/28/2026	Supervisors Rodney Savannah	1 1 1	Volunteer \$702.56	
Update assessment data throughout the year and submit to Yakima County, as directed, to facilitate processing of District Assessment funding.	1/6/2026	Trish	7	\$1,966.16	
Review existing policy manuals, personnel policies, RCW 89.08, agreements with conservation partners, and position descriptions for staff once per year.	6/30/2026	Supervisors Rodney Savannah Trish	0.25 0.25 0.25 0.25	Volunteer \$245.86	
Participate in statewide committee work by attending at least one meeting.	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah	1 1	\$702.56	
Develop training plan for supervisors and employees.	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah Regional Manager	0.25 0.25	\$175.64	
Assist cities, towns, ports, and other stakeholders with projects as needed.	6/30/2026	Supervisors Rodney Savannah	0.25 4 2	Volunteer \$2,246.56	
Utilize all efforts and available resources. Include implementation of BMPs, including those for soil health, nutrient management, and irrigation water management to address Lower Yakima Valley resource concerns.	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah PTE/Staff	60 30 28	\$25,243.20 \$8,455.20 \$4,448.00	

Education and Outreach

Goal(s): Provide information and educational programs for the general public, landowners, schools, and all others interested in protecting our natural resources utilizing in-house, hands-on, and web-based curriculums such as workshops, field days, and webinars.

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective:

Education and Outreach programs will provide “hands-on” and alternative experiences to thousands of students & teachers.

Funding Source(s): WSCC, Local Assessment, potential future grants

Activities for FY2025	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Manage and maintain District website for public outreach and information on VSP, current issues, topics, and district programs as needed throughout the year.	6/30/2026	Savannah	5	\$1,409.20	
Continue to work with Benton and Franklin Conservation Districts to provide education & outreach programs such as Salmon in the Classroom, Heritage Gardens, etc. within our district.	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah	3 3	\$2,107.68	MOU agreements in place
Maintain awareness of water storage issues by attending at least one meeting concerning water storage alternatives. Promote the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan at a local and watershed scale.	6/30/2026	Supervisors Rodney	0.5 1	Volunteer \$420.72	
Work with the Yakima Valley Fire Adapted Coalition and other existing organizations to promote achieving greater effectiveness in addressing wildfire issues (currently no meetings). Regularly attend meetings and Participate in Community Wildfire Protection programs when offered.	6/30/2026	Rodney Savannah	1 1	\$420.72 \$281.84	Not actively meeting

Budget

Based on FY2023 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023)*

Assessment Receipts	\$83,690.70
Grant Funds	\$308,312.19
Rent, Leases	\$38,000
Interest Earned	\$110
Inter-Seed Drill Rental Fees	\$9,500
Other	
ESTIMATED REVENUES	\$439,612.89
Assessment Administration Fee	\$11,000
Education and Outreach	\$10,000
Employee Wages and Benefits	\$195,000
Property Tax	\$5,700
Dues	\$4,000
Administration/Operational Expenses	\$45,000
Cost Share	\$98,000
Engineering	\$5,357.23
Consulting	\$19,055
No-Till Drill Program Maintenance/Repairs	\$2,000
ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES	\$422,700.23

*Note that some values are funded or expended as part of a biennial grant budget. For this case, totals for grants on a biennial schedule were reduced by half to try to better reflect an annual budget.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

BLM – Bureau of Land Management

BMP – Best Management Practice

BuRec – Bureau of Reclamation

CAPP – Conservation Accountability and Performance Program

DNR – Department of Natural Resources

DOE – Department of Ecology

GWMA – Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area

MOU – Memorandum of Understanding

NPDES – National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service

TMDL – Total Maximum Daily Load

VSP – Voluntary Stewardship Program

WDFW – Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

WSCC – Washington State Conservation Commission

WSDA – Washington State Department of Agriculture

WSU – Washington State University