

Escambia Soil and Water Conservation District

Goals & Objectives

FY2024-2025

Conservation District Office

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OVERVIEW

The Escambia Soil and Water Conservation District, referred to below as “the District”, has created this document as a summary of its program goals and objectives for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, pursuant to Florida Statue 189.0694(1). The contents of this document were approved by a majority vote of the District Supervisors at the regular business meeting on 19 Sep 2024.

These goals and objectives are subject to change by the District as opportunities and resources change over the course of the year. Such changes will be approved by the District and documented in official meeting minutes, and this document will be updated as soon as practical thereafter (see Summary of Changes section, below). However, the District may engage at any time in other duly approved activities not specifically listed in this document.

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

The Escambia Soil and Water Conservation District works to conserve and improve the quality, and promote the sustainable utilization, of soil and water resources within its service area through cooperation with public and private stakeholders.

The Escambia Soil and Water Conservation District envisions a healthy natural environment capable of supporting a diverse array of rural and urban uses by the County’s residents, businesses, government, visitors, and wildlife.

CORE PROGRAM AREAS

The District has identified three core areas guiding the projects and activities in which it engages and supports:

1. Connecting People and Programs

Recognizing that many existing programs are compatible with the District's Mission and Vision, the District seeks to capitalize on the benefits these programs offer to the County's environment, stakeholders, and economy. "People" includes, but is not limited to, individual landowners, land users, visitors, businesses, local/municipal governments, or non-governmental organizations. "Programs" includes, but is not limited to, grants, scholarships, cost-share programs, endowments, tax credits/deductions, incentives, materiel, and educational opportunities.

2. Education and Outreach

Progress toward achieving the District's Mission and Vision depends greatly on an informed and supportive public. Therefore, the District recognizes the need to communicate with local stakeholders on relevant issues; educate them on scientific, technical, regulatory, and administrative matters related to those issues; and motivate them to make efforts away from detrimental effects and toward a positive outcome.

3. Monitoring Local Issues and Events Impacting Environmental Quality

Major environmental quality issues may be acute (e.g., extreme weather event) or chronic (e.g., Superfund and brownfield sites). Most of these issues have a management plan under the direction of a responsible party or a public agency. The District intends to monitor the status of such issues in the local area, inform the public of impacts or threats to soil and water, and advise local agencies as necessary.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

CORE AREA 1: CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PROGRAMS

GOAL 1. Expand local farmer participation in USDA NRCS Programs (e.g., EQIP, CSP)

Objectives:

1. Evaluate changes to priorities and local opportunities available under the forthcoming Farm Bill, once finalized.
2. Build a customer list of local agricultural landowners willing to engage in grant-funded programs.
3. Host an annual educational event/clinic to encourage farmers to participate in NRCS programs for the first time and encourage existing participants to expand the scope/intensity of their conservation practices.

GOAL 2. Assist in the return of aquaculture to local inshore waters

Objectives:

1. In order to become more informed in this area, all District Supervisors will complete the Shellfish Harvester Training Course provided by the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission.
2. The District will host a clinic covering the regulatory framework and water quality concerns for parties interested in engaging in aquaculture.

CORE AREA 2: EDUCATION & OUTREACH

GOAL 1. Participate annually in the Bluejacket Jamboree

Objectives:

1. Provide an informative display of pertinent issues and resources available to attendees of the event.
2. Build a customer base of persons interested in participating in conservation activities.

GOAL 2. Support youth education of conservation issues

Objectives:

1. Promote youth participation in speech, poster, and essay contests sponsored by agricultural and conservation organizations (e.g., FFA, 4-H)
2. Serve as judges of such contests, as appropriate.

GOAL 3. Promote the preservation and expansion of pollinator forage.

Objectives:

1. Conduct a PSA campaign over billboard and radio.
2. Liaise with local nurseries to discourage the sale of exotic plant species in favor of native species.
3. Liaise with local government to incorporate native host plants for pollinators in public spaces.

CORE AREA 3: MONITORING LOCAL ISSUES

GOAL 1. Establish a public-facing area on the District's web page for the purpose of posting quarterly updates on each issue the District identifies as an ongoing concern for local environmental quality.

Objectives:

1. District will identify at least three pertinent issues appropriate for long-term follow-up.
2. Web page will be modified by 31 DEC 24 to accommodate this feature.
3. Quarterly updates will begin posting at end of Q1 2025.

GOAL 2. Promote the resumption of waste recycling in Pensacola

Objectives:

1. Engage with ECUA and City waste management officials.
2. Develop, approve, and submit to local entities a formal Resolution stating the District's position on this issue.
3. Post a quarterly update on this issue to the public on the District's web page.

GOAL 3. Track and report on the health of local watersheds.

Objectives:

1. Post a quarterly update on this issue to the public on the District's web page.

GOAL 4. Establish relationships with local journalists interested in covering environmental issues.

Objectives:

1. Submit the District's policy positions to local media.
2. Make District Supervisors available for statements or interviews.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

30 SEP 2024 – Initial issue.