

The Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District Strategic Plan

2024 – 2030



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Prepared For:

The Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District Board of Directors

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Introduction

The purpose of this plan is to outline the strategic goals the Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District (HLVRCD or District) seeks to achieve, and the appropriate strategies it should take to achieve them. The timeline for reaching the goals outlined in this plan is six years. The contents of this plan were developed collaboratively between staff, Directors, and community partners. This living document will serve as a tool for the HLVRCD to help its members conduct relevant, on-the-ground conservation work. Annual Work Plans are developed and adopted each year by the HLVRCD Board of Directors to provide specific information relative to the programs and projects intended to implement the strategies identified in this Strategic Plan. The District will monitor and evaluate progress toward meeting Strategic Plan goals and strategies on an annual basis and present these results in an Annual Report.

Background

Resource Conservation Districts are one of California's earliest grassroots conservation organizations that identify conservation needs and support local land managers in implementing solutions on a voluntary basis. The catastrophic soil losses of the Dust Bowl in the 1930s sparked national and state recognition that soil erosion was the greatest challenge to the country's ability to feed its people and to be a leader in agricultural production. Non-regulatory Conservation Districts were conceived by the federal government and were later sanctioned by the State of California in 1938 to provide assistance to local managers in addressing soil and resource conservation challenges.

The HLVRCD was established by a Resolution of the Lassen County Board of Supervisors on May 3, 1954, for the purpose of addressing soil and water problems in the District service area. The District covers over 2,233,711 acres within Lassen County, including the Susan River watershed, Pine Creek/Eagle Lake watershed, Long Valley Creek watershed, Smoke Creek, Madeline Plains, and North Feather River watershed.

In July 2007, the Superior Court of Lassen County delegated authority to the HLVRCD to provide watermaster services to the water rights holders of the Susan River Watermaster Service Area.

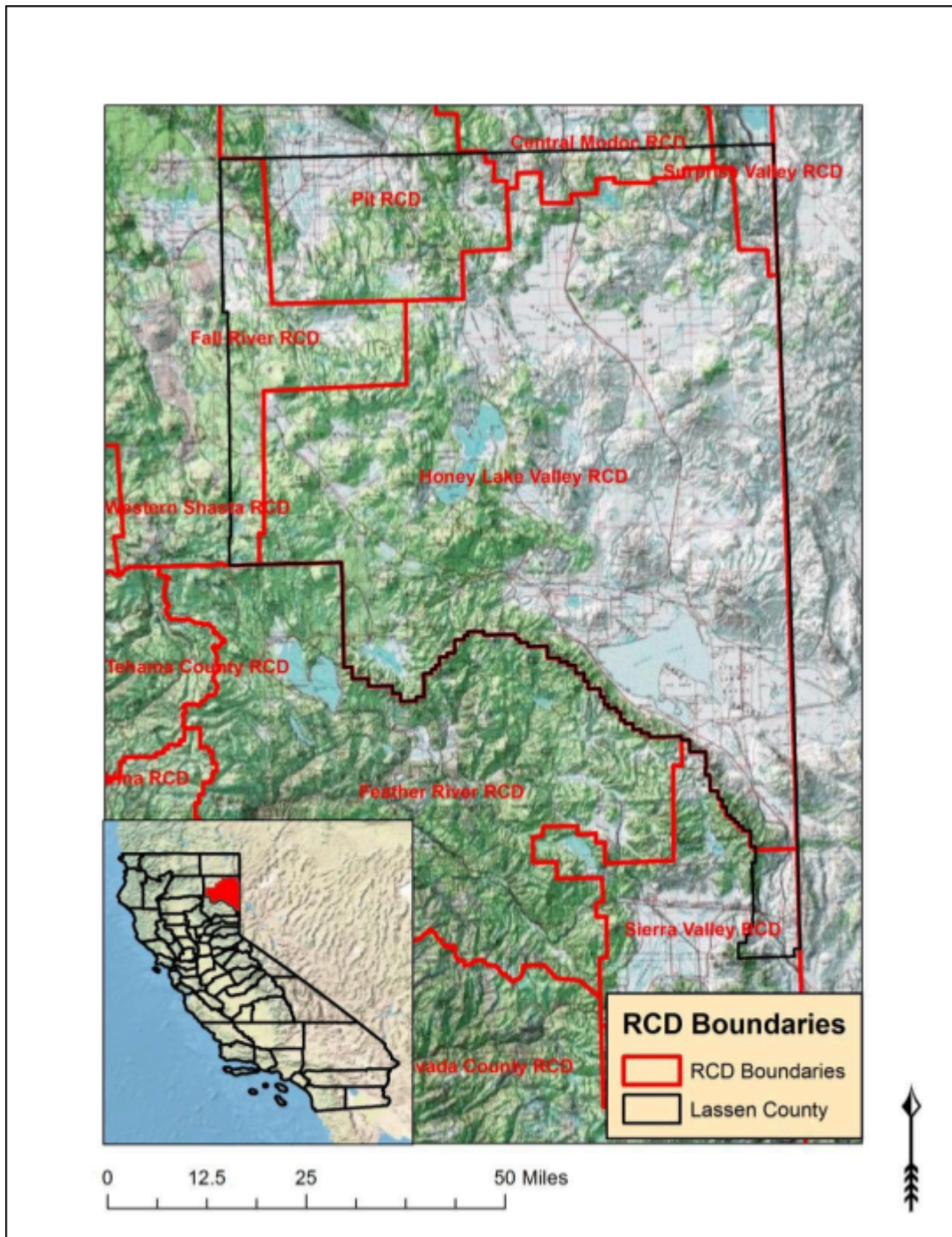
Leadership and Governance

Leadership and governance of the HLVRCD is provided by a five-member volunteer Board of Directors, which consists of local landowners with diverse backgrounds and interests. The roles of the Directors are to establish priorities, set policies and guidelines, and oversee general operations. However, due to the District's limitations, it is not unusual for a Director to actively engage in program/project planning or implementation. Currently, day-to-day management is conducted by a full-time District Manager. The work of the District is performed by the District Manager, associated project staff, and a full-time Deputy Watermaster. Some services such as financial and professional forestry services are contracted out.

The District is involved in projects that provide significant benefits to the environment and all members of the community within the service area. We work closely with the local community

to steward our natural resources, support agriculture, and act as the Watermaster for the Susan River Watermaster Service Area. Our staff completes projects designed to restore the land and improve production. The HLVRCD is proud to offer these services and seeks to make positive changes in the local, regional, and greater community of California.

Our mission is to conserve, restore, and sustain local agricultural and natural resources for those who live, work, or visit the service area.



Preplanning Analysis

The HLVRCD has an important and diverse mission that requires significant support to complete. A strategic plan for implementing programs and projects, funding, and staffing that fulfills the mission requires significant thought and involvement from interested parties. The District Manager organized an in-depth review of the strategic plan to be approved by the Board. Following this, a working-group composed of a diverse cross-section of community organizations, individuals, and government agencies reviewed the updated strategic plan and offered suggestions and input.

Strategic Issues

The HLVRCD and partners identified several strategic issues that must be addressed in order for the District to meet its mission now and into the future. These issues, listed below, were identified through the analytical step of this planning effort. The topics are important because they inform all aspects of our organization and determine our success.

1. Build HLVRCD leadership and organizational capacity.
2. Prioritize the conservation needs of the community.

Timeframe

The timeframe to achieve the goals outlined in this plan and clarify these strategic issues is six years, ending June 30, 2030. This plan is intended to be a living document and will be updated as significant changes occur. By June 30, 2030, all the action items should be completed or sustaining. If not, or if items are completed and goals are not realized or new issues arise, further assessment will occur and goals reconsidered. The HLVRCD will conduct future planning to update this document and set a new timeline for implementation.

Through the implementation of Annual Plans, the HLVRCD will generate and operate programs, projects, and services consistent with this Strategic Plan.

Goals and Strategies to Address Strategic Issues

Strategic Issue 1: Build HLVRCO leadership and organizational capacity.

To increase the ability to successfully meet its mission, the HLVRCO must build its leadership and organizational capacity. The HLVRCO has a fully staffed board, with several board members who have been reelected more than once. The organization is still small but aims to continue growing its capacity. The resource conservation work planned and completed is predicated upon the successful award of funding from outside organizations.

Goal 1.1: The HLVRCO Board of Directors actively, knowledgeably, and effectively leads the District and its employees in the District's mission.

Strategies:

- Seek diversification of interests and skill sets among Directors.
- Update and improve District policies as needed, and develop new policies and procedures as needed to improve operations and transparency.
- Increase the District's visibility.
- Improve financial knowledge and ensure fiduciary responsibilities are met to reduce risk and prevent waste, fraud, and abuse of District financial resources.
- Build cross-functional knowledge and perspective.
- Leverage opportunities to develop, mentor, and grow employees.

Goal 1.2: The HLVRCO consists of a fully functioning staff with the capacity to increase program development and delivery from 2023 levels.

Strategies:

- Maintenance of full and part-time staff to fit the needs of the District.
- Identify and schedule staff training.
- Develop and implement appropriate programs to further HLVRCO's mission.
- Increase the District's visibility.
- Conduct community outreach.
- Increase partnership capacity and collaboration.
- Network and collaborate with other RCOs.

Goal 1.3: Sustain diverse funding to build and expand RCO programs.

Strategies:

- Identify and implement fee-for-service opportunities.
- Track and seek funding opportunities that are appropriate for implementing District programs.
- Explore funding opportunities.
- Improve grant writing skills and grant administration expertise.

Goal 1.4: Provide Watermaster services in a professional and effective manner.

Strategies:

- Enforce the various water decrees.
- Provide necessary training to the Deputy Watermaster.
- Build relationships and networks with water users, partners, and peers.
- Maintain the Watermaster Rules and Regulations as the needs of the Service Area change.
- Maintain an active Water Advisory Committee.

Strategic Issue 2: Prioritize the Conservation Needs of the Community.

In order for the HLVRCD to stay relevant to the conservation needs of the service area (community), it must focus resources on priority natural resource conservation issues. Although the District operations and capacity have expanded, there are still limited financial resources. To utilize our resources most effectively and efficiently, we must focus attention on prioritizing the conservation needs identified.

Goal 2.1: Foster partnerships with diverse organizations within our community to help drive the conservation work the RCD seeks to accomplish.

Strategies:

- Participate and collaborate in programs or on projects complementary to the District's mission.
- Provide support to organizations, agencies, and others to assist in their goals as well as familiarize them with the role of the RCD and the contributions it can provide.
- Seek new partnerships and collaborative working relationships.

Goal 2.2: Increase community understanding on natural resource conservation and the role of the HLVRCDC.

Strategies:

- Utilize outreach strategies to educate local communities on the RCD’s role and value.
- Develop volunteer opportunities as appropriate.
- Increase conservation education.
- Gain a better understanding of the community’s needs.

Goal 2.3 Expand the availability of resources the RCD can provide.

Strategy:

- The District will seek opportunities and/or implement projects within multiple categories should resources become available. These categories can include, but are not limited to:
 - Agricultural land conservation
 - Climate change
 - Range health
 - Soil health
 - Wildlife habitat improvement and conservation

Strategic Plan Implementation

Annual Work Plans (AWP) are developed and adopted each year by the HLVRCDC Board of Directors to provide specific information relative to the programs and projects intended to implement the strategies identified in this Strategic Plan. The District will monitor and evaluate progress toward meeting Strategic Plan goals and strategies on an annual basis and present these results in a 3-Year Report to the public. To implement the programs and achieve our mission, funds are primarily sought from State and Federal grant programs or agreements with local and regional government agencies, with the goal articulated herein of also utilizing fee-for-service agreements with for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Priority work for the District will be identified in each year’s AWP.

Appendix: 2024 Organization Chart

