

Siuslaw Watershed Council

Strategic Plan Update



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Siuslaw Watershed Council

2012 Strategic Plan Update

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Siuslaw Watershed Council (SWC) created a strategic plan in 2004 and updated it in 2008. This 2012 update provides direction for the organization for the next three to tens years. The process focused on the goals, strategies and action levels. It was done through separate meetings on each strategic focus area, a general Council meeting and a day-long retreat with the Executive Committee and Coordinator/Executive Director. Both SWC members and outside experts participated in the focus area meetings (See Appendix B for list of participants.)

As evidence of the Council's clarity of mission and long-term vision, this plan update process reaffirmed the existing goals with minor modification. Only one new goal was added. Many strategies, formerly called objectives, were revised to more accurately capture the Council's current work and approach. Several new ones were added. In addition, specific actions to implement strategies were revised and added. Below are the goals within this 2012 update.

Environment

Goal ENV-1: Promote restoration and habitat maintenance in Siuslaw Basin and Coastal Lakes area.

Goal ENV-2: Monitor water quality, habitat, and other indicators of watershed health.

New Goal ENV-3: Promote interactions that result in innovative approaches to improve watershed health.

Outreach and Education

Goal OE-I: Develop a comprehensive, cohesive watershed education program.

Goal OE-2: Promote the mission, priorities, and opportunities to engage with the SWC to a wide, diverse audience.

Economic Development

Goal ED-1: Promote the restoration economy.

Goal ED-2: Build a healthy sustainable economy.

Organizational Structure

Goal OS-I: Promote a strong and healthy organizational structure

Goal OS-II: Successfully manage finances.

Goal OS-III: Secure stable funding.

Siuslaw Watershed Council

2012 Strategic Plan Update

BACKGROUND

The Siuslaw Watershed Council (SWC) created a strategic plan in 2004. That original plan was updated in 2008. Between 2008 and 2012 the Council had made significant progress towards its goal and had grown as an organization. In 2012 the SWC decided to update its strategic plan again to give direction for the organization for next three to ten years. The SWC's strategic plan guides its annual work plan, which contains the specific tasks that are carried out to achieve the goals and mission. The plan also supports the Council's policies and procedures. Just prior to this strategic plan update effort, the Council participated in an organizational assessment conducted by the University of Oregon Nonprofit Clinic. That process outlined SWC's organizational strengths to build upon and also some weaknesses to address as it went through the strategic planning process. These two processes combine to help the SWC achieve long-term sustainability.

PURPOSE AND PROCESS

The organization felt that its mission and four strategic focus areas (Environment, Outreach and Education, Economic Development, Organizational Structure) were still accurate. The plan update process focused on the goal, strategy and action levels. Some changes were made to the mission statement to more accurately capture the geographic area in which the Council works, to acknowledge the extensive partnering the Council engages in, and to reflect terminology the SWC currently uses to describe its work.

The process for updating the plan was to hold meetings on each strategic focus area. Existing committees of the Council and other stakeholders were invited to participate in these input sessions so that the plan update could be informed by many. Participants in the strategic focus area meetings first identified accomplishments and successes over the past years. This *appreciative inquiry* of what is working well in the organization served as the foundation for consideration of what to strive to accomplish in the future. Meeting participants on a whole were very positive about the Council's accomplishments. Some of the accomplishments they identified were:

- Enhanced and opened up stream miles
- Strong participation in planting program
- Restoration of complexity to riparian and estuarine habitat
- Strong interface with the school system
- Supplementing local employment opportunities

And, the consensus was that the Council has many strengths to build upon as it continues to pursue its mission over the next 10 years. Strengths included:

- Effective partnership builder
- Resilient, adaptive, forward-thinking organization and staff;
- Strong engagement and meeting attendance
- Expansion of geographic area
- Multiple disciplines working together, sharing.

A more complete list from the appreciative inquiry can be found in Appendix A. A list of participants is included in Appendix B.

Participants then analyzed existing goals and objectives to determine how to modify and add to them to set forth the Council's focus for the coming years. They considered the near term (1-3 years) and longer term (10 years). As in the 2004 update, the question of whether to increase, maintain or decrease emphasis on an objective was asked. The same icons of ▲ = increase effort and ► = maintain current level of effort are used in this update. Some specific actions to take to implement the strategies were also identified. [Note: This update changed the term *objectives* to *strategies*.] Notes from these strategic focus area meetings were shared at a general meeting of the Council. Participants were asked to identify what strategies they felt most excited about the Council pursuing. This information gave the Executive Committee a sense of where it would find strong support from members on elements of the plan. Finally, the Executive Committee held a retreat to deliberate over the input gathered, to evaluate what strategies and actions should go in this 2012 update, and to fine-tune the wording to most accurately reflect the Council's work. Not all ideas were considered appropriate for a "strategic plan;" some were more relevant to annual work plans. All notes were retained to inform the Councils' work moving forward.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Siuslaw Watershed Council supports sound economic, social, and environmental uses of the natural and human resources in the Siuslaw River Basin, Coastal Lakes and near-shore ocean. The Council encourages cooperation and partnering among public and private watershed entities to promote awareness and understanding of watershed functions by adopting and implementing a whole watershed strategy for sustainable natural resource management and production.

GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS

Strategic Focus Area: Environment

Consistent with its mission, the SWC has identified the environment as a strategic focus area. The Council has established the following goals to guide its ecosystem restoration and watershed monitoring efforts, from ridge-top to ridge-top. The Council will take a holistic approach to watershed management, understanding the interconnectedness of a healthy ecosystem, a vibrant social community, and a strong economy.

Goal ENV-1: Promote restoration and habitat maintenance in Siuslaw Basin and Coastal Lakes area.

Strategy 1: Focus work on prioritized areas.

[▲ Increase and then maintain ►]

- 1) Update priorities every 5 years in response to funding sources and personnel changes.
- 2) Pick a number of sub-basins to focus on for approximately two-thirds of work.
- 3) Keep opportunities open for work in other areas, approximately one-third of workload.
- 4) Identify sub-basins with good water quality. Determine why this is occurring.

Strategy 2: Partner on invasives control and prevention program.

[▲ Increase effort over 3 and 10-year timeframes]

- 1) Contribute to existing inventories, including plants and aquatic species.
- 2) Use riparian vegetation restoration planting as a control tool.
- 3) Educate new landowners and the public.
- 4) Partner on control.
- 5) Prioritize efforts through work with partners.

Strategy 3: Conduct riparian vegetation restoration program.

[► Maintain current level of effort]

- 1) Shift focus areas over time in response to accomplishments and newly identified needs.
- 2) Provide outreach education opportunities for all residents and landowners.
- 3) Continue annual distribution.
- 4) Provide continual release for participants by crew and volunteers as appropriate.
- 5) Target Native Plant Distribution efforts to increase plant survival rates
- 6) Continue inspection/monitoring and GIS mapping.

Goal ENV-I: Promote restoration and habitat maintenance in Siuslaw Basin and Coastal Lakes area (continued).

Strategy 4: Partner on aquatic habitat restoration and enhancement (stream complexity and maintenance of healthy fish stocks).

[▶ Maintain current level of effort]

- 1) Shift focus areas over time in response to priorities and completion.
- 2) GIS mapping of identified and completed sites.
- 3) Work with ODFW and other partner resources to identify, design and complete projects.
- 4) Monitor and enhance previous projects.

Strategy 5: Partner on fish passage restoration.

[▶ Maintain current level of effort over 3 and 10-year timeframes.]

- 1) Revisit prioritization every 7 years.
- 2) GIS mapping of fish passage limitations and completed replacements.
- 3) Work with partners on replacements

Strategy 6: Maintain high quality habitats.

[▶ Maintain current level of effort]

- 1) Support landowners in maintaining habitat.
- 2) Partner with McKenzie River Trust, SWCD, Wetlands Trust and other partners to recruit and assist landowners to protect habitat with the tools of acquisition and conservation easements.
- 3) GIS mapping of sites.

Strategy 7: Partner on uplands restoration and preservation.

[▶ Maintain current level of effort]

- 1) Explore potential for oak, prairie and other upland restoration and preservation in upper Basin.
- 2) Work with partners (BLM, NRCS, SWCD, USFS, industry) on restoration and preservation.
- 3) Research uplands issues and how they impact watershed health and function.

Goal ENV-2: Monitor water quality, habitat, and other biological measures of watershed health.

Strategy 1: Operate a Water Quality Monitoring Program.

[▲ Increase and then reassess]

- 1) Expand parameters and capabilities for all programs.
- 2) Sustain existing community water quality volunteer program.
- 3) Undertake additional programs, for example fish counts, bio-monitoring, lead removal, assays.
- 4) Include at least one site in all 5th fields.
- 5) Support continuation of stream gauge.
- 6) Collaborate and partner on water quality monitoring.
- 7) Share results to increase awareness and encourage participation in volunteer program.

Strategy 2: Convene a water quality subcommittee of diverse stakeholders whose work will inform the water quality monitoring program.

[▲ Increase and then reassess]

- 1) Identify and assess needs and issues based upon emerging research.
- 2) Prioritize needs and issues.

Strategy 3: Gather and utilize biological and physical habitat data (e.g., fish, mussels, water quality, limiting factors) to inform Water Quality Monitoring Program and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).

[▲ Increase over 3- and 10-year time periods]

- 1) Increase GIS and other data management capability.
- 2) Continue to share data on SWC website.

Strategy 4: Partner to reduce toxins and improve water quality.

[▲ Increase over 3- and 10-year time periods]

- 1) Encourage state and EPA to incorporate new parameters.
- 2) Increase involvement with Mid-Coast TMDL Development efforts.

Goal ENV-3: Promote interactions that result in innovative approaches to improve watershed health.

Strategy 1: Maintain and share technical proficiency (i.e. science, BMPs) with community, partner organizations.

[▶ Maintain current level and then increase ▲]

- 1) Hold regular monthly Technical Team meetings.
- 2) Continue scientific presentations at General Membership meetings.
- 3) Convene special committees, like water quality committee, with diverse representation.

Strategic Focus Area: Outreach and Education

Consistent with its mission, this strategic area focuses on the Council's long-term goal of expanding local understanding of watershed functions and the complexities of watershed health, including environmental, social and economic health. The Council will work to meet its community outreach and education goals through its educational programs, publications, regular Council meetings, volunteer opportunities, special events. Outreach and education activities will be strengthened through collaboration with local and regional entities involved in complimentary activities.

Goal OE-I: Develop a comprehensive, cohesive watershed education program.

Strategy 1: Use watershed as a laboratory for teacher education.

[▲ Focus on in 3-year timeframe]

- 1) Bring teacher training programs (for graduate credits and continuing education credits) to the watershed.
- 2) Be a resource for the new Lane Community College (LCC) Watershed Technician program.

Strategy 2: Be a resource to and partner with local schools throughout watershed.

[▲ Focus on in 3-year timeframe and then maintain that higher level ►]

- 1) Hold regular meetings of education committee.
- 2) Build ongoing relationship with schools.
- 3) Communicate what the SWC can provide.
- 4) Provide opportunities for students to be involved in restoration work.
- 5) Be the "field trip capital of the county" for K-12 and colleges.
- 6) Provide public speakers to schools.

Strategy 3: Offer specialized skill-building workshops and tours.

[▲ Increase and then assess to determine appropriate future level of effort]

- 1) Tie workshops into existing events, like community festivals.
- 2) Offer eco-education tours on the Water Trail.
- 3) Seek partnership opportunities, for example, with LCC to offer day-long adult education workshops and tours.

Strategy 4: Continue to run Siuslaw Watershed Education Camps.

[► Maintain current level of effort]

Strategy 5: Hold Community Information Forums throughout the watershed.

[► Maintain current level of effort]

Strategy 6: Investigate development of an Education Program Center incorporated with Council office.

[A 10-year out effort]

Goal OE-2: Promote the mission, priorities, and opportunities to engage with the SWC to a wide, diverse audience.

Strategy 1: Create a Communications Plan.

[▲ Focus effort in immediate term and then work the plan]

Strategy 2: Create and disseminate own materials.

[▲ Increase effort over both time periods]

- 1) Send out newsletter and postcards.
- 2) Create a tri-fold that leverages successful SWC programs to raise greater awareness and promote action.
- 3) Actively manage website and Facebook.
- 4) Make and post Flip videos on YouTube to show SWC work in action.
- 5) Find an intern to help with this strategy.

Strategy 3: Install signage to raise visibility of work.

[▲ Increase and then maintain ►]

- 1) Post signs at restoration projects.
- 2) Partner with McKenzie River Trust to create and install access and interpretive signage at Waite Ranch.
- 3) Install road signs at more highway entrances to the watershed.

Strategy 4: Use schools to develop outreach.

[▲ Increase and then maintain ►]

- 1) Reach parents through their kids.
- 2) Have students help make SWC outreach materials using multiple media.

Strategy 5: Offer tours to raise awareness, recognition and funds.

[▲ Increase and then assess to determine future level of effort]

- 1) Partner with established groups (e.g. Elderhostel) to provide adult education tours.
- 2) Seek opportunities with civic and other groups.
- 3) Seek opportunities with Lane County Travel and Chambers of Commerce.
- 4) Seek opportunities with colleges, community colleges, and community education programs.

Strategy 6: Attract research about SWC, SWC programs and the watershed.

[▲ Increase and then maintain ►]

- 1) Develop ongoing relationships with researchers to get students to collaborate with SWC on multi-year projects.

Goal OE-2: Promote the mission, priorities, and opportunities to engage with the SWC to a wide, diverse audience (continued).

Strategy 7: Capture and share oral history of area and restoration sites.

[▲ Increase and then maintain ►]

Strategy 8: Work with local, regional, national and international media.

[► Maintain current level of effort over 3 years and then increase ▲]

Strategy 9: Outreach to underserved communities (Coastal Lakes, Florence, Blachly, Lorane)

[► Maintain current level of effort]

- 1) Have Coordinator's hours in communities.

Strategic Focus Area: Economic Development

Consistent with the Council's mission and understanding that a healthy watershed includes sustaining vibrant human communities in balance with our environment, this strategic area focuses on defining what a sustainable economy would look like and collaborating across the watershed community to create and support it. The Council's vision for a healthy watershed economy includes family wage jobs and locally owned businesses and industries whose activities support the sustainable use of watershed resources while supporting vibrant communities. The Council promotes efforts to increase the return on resources that come off the Siuslaw watershed.

Goal ED-1: Promote the restoration economy.

Strategy 1: Continue creating contracts and jobs associated with restoration, education and monitoring projects.

[▶ Maintain current level of effort]

Strategy 2: Support forest/landowner initiatives for sustainable forest management.

[▶ Maintain current level of effort]

Strategy 3: Support Stewardship partnership for USFS stand treatment.

[▶ Maintain current level of effort.]

1) Maintain SWC presence and involvement in Siuslaw Stewardship Group.

Goal ED-2: Build a healthy sustainable economy.

Strategy 1: Convene an Economic Development committee of diverse stakeholders to meet quarterly.

[▲ Increase then maintain ▶]

Strategy 2: Conduct research to identify needs, opportunities, markets, and also models to accomplish goals.

[▲ Increase then maintain ▶]

Strategy 3: Develop and implement a plan.

[▲ Increase effort over 3 years and then assess to determine future level of effort.]

Strategy 4: Create opportunities for nature tourism, eco-tourism and agri-tourism.

[▲ Increase then maintain ▶]

1) Partner on River Trail.

2) Engage local and regional recreation organizations and users.

Goal ED-2: Build a healthy sustainable economy (continued).

Strategy 5: Create low-tech opportunities, e.g. firewood sales, for small woodlot owners.

[▲ Increase then maintain ►]

Strategy 6: Help local producers market products.

[▲ Increase then maintain ►]

- 1) Create website or collaborate with existing one to link people and local resources, to link producers to purchasers.

Strategic Focus Area: Organizational Structure

In order to fulfill its mission and meet its goals in other strategic areas, the Council must also focus on strengthening and sustaining itself as an organization. With this as a long-term goal, the Council will work to diversify its funding base to include both private and public funding sources, increased Council membership, and individual donations. In order to build organizational capacity and guide the organization's future, the Council will support Board and staff development and training, encourage collaboration, and will work to sustain an organizational structure that is clear, efficient and effective while being responsive to the needs of Council members and the watershed community.

Goal OS-I: Promote a strong and healthy organizational structure.

Strategy 1: Recruit, develop support and retain skilled staff.

[▲ Increase and then maintain ►]

- 1) Commit to offering benefits.
- 2) Provide a supportive environment and training opportunities.
- 3) Conduct periodic workload reviews.

Strategy 2: Increase Council and membership engagement.

[▲ Increase effort in 3 and 10-year time frame]

- 1) Recruit Leadership Board representatives from broader geographic area.
- 2) Recruit new members from throughout geographic area by
 - Distributing newsletters that include membership/donor envelopes.
 - Promoting membership at forums and other public events.
 - Exploring mutual interests with other organizations in growth potential areas.
- 3) Retain members through annual membership letter/request.
- 4) Encourage attendance at council meetings, events from broader geographic area.
- 5) Expand volunteer opportunities by increasing advertisement and promotion of opportunities.

Strategy 3: Strengthen Executive Board participation.

[▲ Increase and then maintain ►]

- 1) Bring on at least 1 new person at each election.
- 2) Encourage members to attend training opportunities that are offered.
- 3) Use on-line resources to improve orientation of new members.
- 4) Prevent burnout by having fun together.
- 5) Mentoring/developing future leadership.

Goal OS-I: Promote a strong and healthy organizational structure (continued).

Strategy 4: Maintain strong legal standing.

[▲ Increase and then maintain ►]

- 1) Make and adopt bylaw changes recommended in University of Oregon review.
- 2) Develop and adopt new policies as recommended in UO review.
- 3) Maintain directors and officers insurance.
- 4) Ensure all local, state and federal reports are filed.

Strategy 5: Secure a new office location by July 1, 2013.

[▲ Increase and then maintain ►]

Goal OS-II: Successfully manage finances.

Strategy 1: Maintain reliable in-house accounting system.

[▲ Increase and then maintain ►]

- 1) Continue Treasurer involvement and review.
- 2) Review procedures annually.

Strategy 2: Use bookkeeping system as a decision-making tool.

[▲ Increase and then maintain ►]

- 1) Review financial reports to see trends and to help determine any needed changes or new strategies.
- 2) Develop and implement new strategies identified in review.

Strategy 3: Ensure accountability.

[► Maintain current level of effort]

- 1) Participate in an annual review/audit.
- 2) Continue multiple reviews of invoice approvals, checks and other financial documents.
- 3) Implement Council's Financial Policies.
- 4) Periodically review the Financial Policies.

Goal OS-III: Secure stable funding.

Strategy 1: Expand the Finance committee to also be a Fundraising committee.
[▲ Increase and then maintain ►]

Strategy 2: Develop and implement a 5-year financial plan.
[▲ Increase and then maintain ►]

Strategy 3¹: Develop and implement a fundraising plan to sustain the organization.
[▲ Increase and then assess to determine future level of effort]

Strategy 5: Create user-friendly outreach materials to help the Council seek donations.
[▲ Increase then maintain ►]

- 1) Create an elevator speech.
- 2) Create a tri-fold brochure about the Council.

¹ The organizational structure focus group and the Executive Committee discussed ways to diversify the SWC's funding. Notes from those discussions are provided to the SWC in a separate document as a reference with creating a fundraising plan.

Appendix A: Siuslaw Watershed Council Accomplishments

The following were listed as accomplishments and things that are going well for the SWC as a whole. These are successes and factors the Council looked to build upon in its 2012 strategic plan update.

- Known as a very active watershed council among peers
 - Resilient, adaptive, forward-thinking organization and staff
 - Strong engagement and meeting attendance
 - Lots of volunteers
 - Lots of opportunities for hands on experience
 - Expansion of geographic area
 - Cost conscious and financially responsible – completed University of Oregon review
 - Healthy mix of long-term and newer members on Executive Committee
-
- Effective partner and partnership builder
 - Welcome atmosphere for coming together
 - Multiple disciplines working together, sharing
 - Regular meetings with diverse representatives
 - Ability to “think outside the box”; be innovative
 - Get things done together that individuals couldn’t do alone
 - Are a technical resource for the community
-
- Enhanced and opened up stream miles
 - Sustained, active planting program
 - Restoration of complexity to riparian and estuarine habitat
 - Water quality monitoring
 - Convened water quality & education committees
 - Data on restoration workforce economy
-
- Strong interface with the school system
 - Classroom visits
 - Academic enrichment/after school program
 - STREAM team – all grant funded
 - Watershed Fridays
 - Summer day camps – grant funded
 - Waite Ranch bringing new media opportunities
 - More and more reliable media coverage
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- Utilizing local contractors
 - Supplementing local employment opportunities
 - Helping people transition to new employment
 - Local food showcase
 - Partnership relationship with King Estate and Chateau Lorane
 - River/Water Trail

Appendix B: Participants in Plan Update Meetings

Paul Burns
Betsy David
Chuck Fisher
Debra Fleming
Robert Forsythe
Jim Grano
Lauren Hesse
Liz Lawrence
Jodi Lemmer
Liza Livelybrooks
Leo Poole
John Scott
Shiloh Sundstrom
Johnny Sundstrom

Billy Burruss, SWC Leadership Board
Charley Dewberry, SWC Leadership Board
Gary Hale, SWC Leadership Board
Eron King, SWC Leadership Board
Dave Rankin, SWC Leadership Board
Rick Shepherd, SWC Leadership Board
Tom Steinberg, SWC Leadership Board
Jan Wroncy, SWC Leadership Board

Dave Cramsey, SWC Executive Committee
Dave Eisler, SWC Executive Committee
Steve Elliot, SWC Executive Committee
Gus Gates, SWC Executive Committee
Ray Kinney, SWC Executive Committee
Nancy Nichols, SWC Executive Committee
Wesley Voth, SWC Executive Committee

Mizu Burruss, SWC
Ginger Cloutier, SWC
Liz Vollmer-Buhl, SWC