

Siuslaw Watershed Council

Strategic Plan



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Executive Summary

Purpose of the Plan

The Siuslaw Watershed Council (SWC) is a community-based, non-profit organization that was founded in 1996 and is based in the 500,000 acre Siuslaw Watershed in coastal Oregon. The Council addresses issues of watershed health using a holistic approach that recognizes the interdependency of environmental, social, and economic concerns. The Council, now in its 8th year, operates with the following mission:

The Siuslaw Watershed Council supports sound economic, social, and environmental uses of the natural and human resources in the Siuslaw River Basin. The Council encourages cooperation amongst public private watershed entities to promote awareness and understanding of watershed functions by adopting and implementing a total watershed approach to natural resource management and production.

The purpose of the plan is to provide the Council with a document to guide its activities over the next ten years. The Strategic Plan goals and objectives will form the basis for an annual Council Action Plan. The Strategic Plan is a visionary document while the Action Plan will outline the concrete action steps to reach that vision. Any effective strategic plan should be reviewed on an annual basis and revised appropriately to reflect the changing goals of a dynamic organization.

The strategic plan was developed through a yearlong planning process with the help of the Council staff, the Executive Board, the strategic planning committee, Council members, and a private consultant. The Council's mission is the starting point for the strategic plan and the plan then provides a framework for fulfilling the mission.

Summary of Major Findings

Chapter 4 of the strategic plan outlines goals that will guide the Council's future programs and activities. These goals are rooted in the Council's mission and are broken down into four strategic areas: Environment; Community Outreach and Education; Economic Development; and Organizational Development. In the day to day working of the Council, there is no clear separation between these focus areas. Goals in each area affect goals in every other area. However, for the sake of clarity, it has been helpful to make the separation.

Goals were developed based on public input and the results of both a SWOT Analysis and a Market Analysis. Each goal was then further broken down into objectives that clarify specific steps to be taken to

implement the goal. For the sake of brevity, the Executive Summary outlines only goals but a complete listing of the Council's goals and objectives can be found in Chapter 4 of the Plan.

Goals

STRATEGIC AREA: ENVIRONMENT

Consistent with its mission, the SWC has identified the "Environment" as a strategic area of focus. The Council has created 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 E-1 Continue to expand restoration efforts to address regional ecosystem needs.

GOAL E-2 Expand monitoring and data inventory programs.

GOAL E-3 Strengthen and develop collaborations with state, federal, and regional agencies, tribes, non-profit organizations, schools, and County governments currently engaged in local restoration efforts

STRATEGIC AREA: COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Consistent with the 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, and special events. Outreach and education activities will be strengthened through collaboration with local and regional entities involved in complimentary activities.

GOAL C-1 Continue and expand education efforts to increase a local understanding of issues of watershed health.

GOAL C-2 Increase volunteer involvement in SWC programs and events.

GOAL C-3 Further develop role of Leadership Board members.

GOAL C-4 Encourage public participation in Council activities through Council meeting attendance and increased participation in Council events.

GOAL C-5 Increase local recognition of the Council, its activities, and its accomplishments.

GOAL C-6 Develop collaborations and partnerships with local organizations, agencies, and governments to increase capacity in all local groups.

STRATEGIC 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.

Goal ED-1: As a Council, develop a working vision of what a "restored" economy would look like.

GOAL ED-2: Identify and encourage sustainable economic opportunities that currently exist in the watershed, while working to develop new opportunities.

GOAL ED-3: Develop increased local jobs through the development and growth of a "restoration economy."

GOAL ED-4: Serve as a conduit between funding sources, businesses, and local landowners in order to encourage economic development.

STRATEGIC AREA: ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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 OD-1: Work to diversify funding streams to include funding from state, federal, and private funding sources with an aim of decreasing dependence on any single source and improving long-term organizational sustainability.

GOAL OD-2: Devote staff and Board time and resources each year to complete both short and long-range planning activities.

GOAL OD-3: Create “Record Management Policy” for all electronic and paper records and data and keep policy updated to meet Council needs.

GOAL OD-4: Ensure that finances are managed to meet annual auditing standards while being clear and transparent and consistent with all applicable laws.

GOAL OD- 5: Further develop, clarify, and institutionalize an “organizational structure.”

GOAL OD-6: Ensure appropriate Board and staff development opportunities to educate, retain, develop and attract Board members.

Methodology

Strategic plans are effective if they clearly capture the goals of an organization. The document itself is important as it serves as a “roadmap” for future Council activities but the *process* of creating the document is equally important. In the case of the Siuslaw Watershed Council, many stakeholders were involved in the creation of the strategic plan. A planning committee was formed in 2003, consisting of the Council Coordinator, staff, Executive Board members and general Council members. The committee met regularly to share community input and to brainstorm the elements of the strategic plan.

In 2004, the Council hired a consultant to finish gathering data, to help facilitate a public input process, and to write the final document. As the most important portion of the plan, the Ch. 4 Goals and Objectives were presented in detail to the general council at a public workshop and public input was solicited and then incorporated. General Council members and members of the community were shown each section of the plan in draft form and were given many opportunities to provide feedback and suggestions. The final document represents a combined effort by Council leadership, members, and stakeholders.

Document Overview

The following is summary of the strategic plan Chapters:

Chapter 1 – Siuslaw Watershed Council

Chapter One provides a foundation for the strategic plan by stating the Council's mission and providing a brief Council history. The Chapter also gives an overview of the local watershed community and a summary of the Council's programs and structure.

Chapter 2 – Market Analysis

This Chapter builds on Chapter One by providing a more detailed look at the watershed community and the externalities that naturally have an impact on the Siuslaw Watershed Council. The chapter provides basic demographic information including population characteristics and employment statistics. The chapter also provides information about the Council's partners and collaborators, its major funding sources, and major external trends.

Chapter 3 – SWOT Analysis

Chapter Three summarizes an analysis that was done to identify the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The analysis brought to light both the organization's assets and its shortcomings. At the same time, the analysis process asks stakeholders to consider both the opportunities and threats existing in the external environment. The results of the SWOT Analysis become the foundation for the Council's strategic goals and objectives.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 provides the Siuslaw Watershed Council with a framework and a guiding document to shape future projects and programs. The Chapter begins by restating the Council's mission and defining four strategic areas that are key components of the mission. In each strategic area, a system of organizational goals and objectives are presented which define priorities for the Council. The goals offer a broad vision of what the Council would like to achieve in accordance with its mission. The policies provide more specific direction on how the Council will implement the goals.

Chapter 1

Siuslaw Watershed Council

Purpose of the Plan

The Siuslaw Watershed Council (SWC) is a community-based, non-profit organization that was founded in 1996 and is based in the 500,000 acre Siuslaw Watershed in coastal Oregon. The Council addresses issues of watershed health using a holistic approach that recognizes the interdependency of environmental, social, and economic concerns. The Council, now in its 8th year, operates with the following mission:

The Siuslaw Watershed Council supports sound economic, social, and environmental uses of the natural and human resources in the Siuslaw River Basin. The Council encourages cooperation amongst public private watershed entities to promote awareness and understanding of watershed functions by adopting and implementing a total watershed approach to natural resource management and production.

The purpose of the plan is to provide the Council with a document to guide its activities over the next ten years. The strategic plan was developed through a yearlong planning process with the help of the Council staff, the Executive Board, the strategic planning committee, Council members, and a private consultant. The Council's mission is the starting point for the strategic plan and the plan then provides a framework for fulfilling the mission.

History of Watershed Councils

The Siuslaw Watershed Council is one of many watershed councils across the state of Oregon. According to state statutes, a watershed council is a “voluntary local organization designated by a local government group convened by a county governing body to address the goal of sustaining natural resource and watershed protection and enhancement within a watershed.”¹

Watershed councils in general came into being because of a string of legislative decisions that began in 1987 when the state legislature

¹ Oregon State Statute, ORS 541.350

created the Governor's Watershed Enhancement Board (GWEB). GWEB brought together for the first time, citizen members of Oregon's primary natural resource boards and commissions to discuss watershed scale issues with federal land management agencies and advisors. At that point, GWEB began to dedicate a small amount of money to demonstration and education projects across the state.

Then in 1993, the state legislature created a Watershed Health program (which was brought into GWEB in 1995) and dedicated \$10 million toward the organization of watershed councils and to conduct restoration projects in the South Coast and Grand Ronde Basins. In 1995, the legislature directed GWEB to administer approximately \$5.5 million remaining from the Watershed Health program funds, plus \$2.6 million from lottery funds, toward watershed enhancement projects.

Also in 1995, the Oregon Legislature unanimously passed House Bill 3441 to support the formation of watershed councils across the state of Oregon. While the Bill did not *mandate* their formation, it did create a watershed council model for Oregon. GWEB's funds would partially support the creation of councils and their projects while also supporting enhancement projects done by landowners, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and other agencies.

The formation of watershed councils was closely tied to the 1997 establishment of the Oregon *Plan for Salmon and Watersheds*. The Oregon Legislature and the Governor, with support from diverse stakeholders, created the "Plan" in response to the listing of Coho and other salmon species under the Endangered Species Act. The "Plan" organized specific measures to address the state's declining anadromous fish populations with the following key elements: Voluntary restoration actions; Coordinated state and federal agency and tribal actions; Monitoring; and Strong Scientific Oversight. Watershed councils became important to "Plan" implementation and programming at watershed councils across the state has been strongly shaped by the vision of the "Plan."²

In 1999, the legislature replaced GWEB with OWEB or the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, an independent state agency with cabinet status, an Executive Director, and an involved Board of Directors. Currently, OWEB continues to support watershed enhancement, education, and land acquisition projects.

History of the Organization

The Siuslaw Watershed Council was initially brought together as program of the Siuslaw Soil and Water Conservation District in 1996.

² Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds, <http://www.oregon-plan.org/about.html>

In 2001, the Council applied for and received its 501(c)(3), tax-exempt status. The Council continues to receive support from OWEB, while also receiving support from other organizations including the National Forest Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife, the Oregon Community Foundation, USBank, the US Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The Siuslaw Watershed Council, like other councils, is made up of citizens who represent local knowledge and have ties to watershed communities in all their complexities. The Council is non-regulatory and can take a holistic approach to watershed health as it works across jurisdictional boundaries and across agency mandates. SWC serves as a forum to bring local landowners and managers together with state, local, and federal agencies. The council is structured to give the people of the Siuslaw Watershed a voice in the management of their own natural resources. Together, the members of the SWC can help to shape a common vision for the ecologic and economic sustainability and livability of their watershed.³

The SWC is a consensus-based collaborative organization, which has a growing base of members. Membership is open anyone who either lives or has interest in the watershed and the Council currently has a steadily growing base of members. However, because SWC activities affect the local landscape and economy, its work has an impact on non-member partners and individuals as well.

The Council currently is one of many organizations and institutions across the Pacific Northwest working to broker the transition from a declining natural resource based economy to a sustainable local economy that supports both healthy watershed ecosystems *and* healthy human communities. In the Siuslaw watershed currently, restoration and education efforts are creating jobs and supporting local businesses while having a positive impact on the regional landscape. In turn, the area's natural beauty, increasingly healthy streams, fish runs, estuaries, and diverse forests form the basis for the area's burgeoning tourism, recreation, and retiree industries.

Since its founding in 1996 and with the help of its partners, the SWC has: restored hundreds of miles of stream bank; replaced prioritized culverts to be fish-friendly; planted thousands of trees in riparian areas; given away thousands more trees to landowners; conducted water quality monitoring efforts; and involved scores of community members through events and as volunteers. The Council has invested in local education efforts and currently organizes field-based watershed education programs during both the academic year and the summer, in

³ Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, <http://www.oweb.state.or.us>, 2004

cooperation with local schools and natural resource managers. The Council has also worked on projects with multiple interns and research teams from both the University of Oregon and Oregon State and strives to connect its activities with a larger statewide network.

Natural Landscape

The Siuslaw Watershed is located along the Oregon coast, midway between the Washington and California borders. The watershed stretches from the Lorane valley in the east, through the coast mountain range to the City of Florence and to the Pacific Ocean. Thanks to its location, the Siuslaw watershed is home to a diversity of ecosystems. At its western edge are ocean dunes and estuaries. Heading inland one finds rich riparian zones along the Siuslaw River and its tributaries, forested hills and then further west, the ridge tops of the Coastal Mountain Range. Once over the mountains, the watershed continues into fertile and slightly drier valleys and ends in vineyard country.

The Siuslaw basin, as it now exists, has been largely shaped by Euro-American settlement. The valleys, wetlands, and riparian areas have been converted to agricultural land and homesteads while much of the forest has been harvested at least once and replanted. Prior to human settlement, which began in the late 1800's, the Siuslaw basin was home to mature forest stands and even today, forests grow at a remarkable rate thanks to heavy rainfall and near-rainforest growing conditions.

The area's stream systems are dynamic and tend to have variable and unpredictable flows. This is thanks to heavy annual rainfall (approximately 76 inches per year in Florence)⁴ and steep terrain along the area's hill slopes and ridge tops, combined with low gradient streams. In addition, the watershed's predominant rock types have a limited ability to store water. Those factors, when combined with the effects of human settlement on watershed processes, tend to make for flows that rise and fall dramatically.

The Siuslaw watershed contains approximately 265 miles of potentially fish-bearing streams and the watershed has historically been one of the most abundant fish producers in the Pacific Northwest.⁵ Significant anadromous fish populations in the area include Coho salmon, Chinook salmon, and Cutthroat Trout. Archeological records indicate the presence of salmon 3,000-4,000 years ago. The area's geography and climate provide favorable conditions for the salmon. However, in the past 100 years, salmon numbers have faced a serious decline. More

⁴ City of Florence Chamber of Commerce, <http://www.florencechamber.com>

⁵ Bureau of Land Management, http://www.edo.or.blm.gov/planning/watershed_analysis/siuslaw/fish2.htm

than 200,000 Coho salmon were counted between 1889 and 1896 compared to just 3,000 counted in a similar time period between 1990 and 1996.⁶ Habitat degradation has contributed to the decline in the fish population. Other factors that have played a role include changing ocean conditions, marine mammal predation, over-fishing, poaching, genetic changes, and disease.⁷

However, the Siuslaw watershed is also fortunate in that its rivers have never been home large dams and the basin contains no major urban area. The largest population center in the area is Florence, a small coastal town of approximately 7,000 people that sits at the very western edge of the watershed. Finally, the basin has never been extensively farmed and to this day, only a small percentage of land is used for agriculture.

Human Settlement

The first people to settle the Siuslaw river basin were the Siuslaw Indians. According to the best historical estimates, anywhere from 900 to 2,100 Siuslaw were present when the Euro-American pioneers arrived in the area. At the time, the Siuslaw's economy and social structure were largely based on the life cycle and population of the salmon. The Siuslaw ensured that enough salmon would reach spawning grounds each year to sustain the population. While *any* settlement alters a landscape, the Siuslaw made relatively few alterations and had used the area's resources sustainably for hundreds, maybe thousands, of years.

Euro-American settlers arrived in the second half of the 1800's and in 1875 the Siuslaw "legally" lost the right to retain the basin as a reservation. Tapping into the area's abundant fish runs, the first hatchery opened in Florence in 1876. Between the years of 1887 and 1892, this cannery packed and shipped more than 68,000 cases of Siuslaw salmon to major city markets across the west coast.

The first sawmill was opened in the watershed in 1879. By 1882, all of the watershed's farmable land had been claimed by new settlers. Florence, the Siuslaw's largest population center, became a legal town-site in 1893 and by this time, the increased settlement of the area was already leaving its mark. Salmon numbers were beginning to decline because of the booming fish industries and logging was affecting not

⁶ Siuslaw Watershed Assessment, <http://www.inforain.org/siuslaw/>

⁷ Ibid

only the forests in the area but the streams as well as streams were heavily modified to facilitate log transport.

In 1914, a railroad connection was made between the watershed and the Willamette valley, allowing the logging industry to exist at an industrial level. Additionally, a jetty was completed at the mouth of the Siuslaw in 1918, facilitating easier and safer transportation into Florence's harbor. By the first few decades of the 20th century, logging technology had greatly improved, roads were continuously being built and now logging could happen not only on the valley floors but on increasingly steep hill slopes as well.

During the 1900's, the area's natural resource economies continued to grow and communities in the watershed became increasingly settled. However, like communities across the Northwest, as extraction technology improved, resources began to become depleted at a faster rate than they could replenish themselves. By 1940, the Oregon State Fish Commission had begun to restrict fishing in response to declining populations. By the 1950's commercial fishing was entirely closed in the Siuslaw. In 1956 the last cannery closed.

The logging industries have also faced decline. In 1993, the Northwest Forest Plan was passed, limiting logging and logging practices on National Forest and BLM lands. This had a significant impact on the area's timber industry as a high percentage of the total land in the watershed is federally owned and managed.⁸

Council Programs

The Siuslaw Watershed Council has been working for the last eight years to restore watershed functions and to improve the overall health of the watershed's communities. The Council fosters innovative partnerships among public agencies, local organizations and private landowners to implement a holistic approach to natural resource management and to increase awareness of watershed functions. The Council's mission identifies three areas of focus: environment, education, and economy. Each of the Council's programs and activities attempts to recognize the interconnectedness of these focuses.

Watershed Restoration Programs: Each year, the Siuslaw Watershed Council partners with federal, state, and local agencies to complete on-the-ground restoration projects throughout the watershed. Past projects have included fish passage enhancement projects, culvert replacements, riparian plantings, and stream channel enhancements. Restoration projects occur on both public and private lands and the

⁸ Siuslaw Watershed Assessment, <http://www.inforain.org/siuslaw/>

Council's technical advisory team reviews every proposed project. The "Tech team" meets once each month and is made up of professionals from natural resource agencies and organizations throughout the watershed. The technical team provides technical expertise and ensures that each Council project is ecologically and technically sound and consistent with the Council's restoration priorities. Restoration projects improve watershed functions while also employing local contractors and improving overall awareness of the importance of watershed health.

Monitoring Program: Long-term monitoring is an important compliment to any restoration program. The Council currently runs a volunteer monitoring program designed to involve community volunteers in the collection of water quality data in the Siuslaw's estuary. Community members work with Council staff to collect water quality data and to keep a record of changing conditions. The monitoring program is an important link between the Council's restoration and education programs as it provides important scientific data that can inform restoration priorities while also engaging community members in the restoration process.

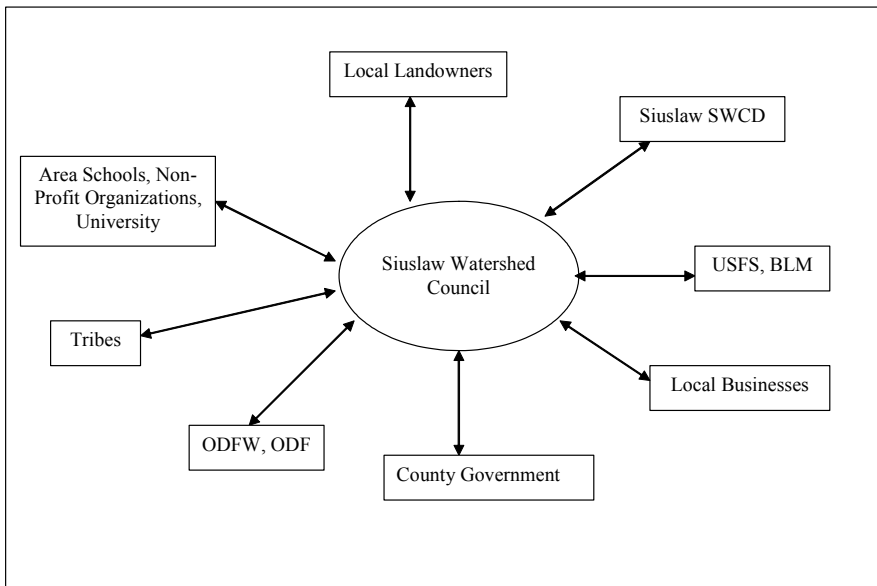
Education and Outreach Programs: To compliment and support its long-term restoration goals, the Council also runs community education and outreach programs. These programs raise community awareness of watershed functions while increasing local investment in improving watershed health. The Council works closely with local non-profits, schools, and natural resource professionals to coordinate hands-on, field based learning activities for area youth both during the school year and in the summer. Additionally, each year, the Council runs a tree distribution program, designed to provide thousands of free trees to local landowners for riparian planting. The Council also publishes a monthly newsletter and provides public education opportunities at each of its monthly general Council meetings.

Economic Development: The Council recognizes that overall watershed health involves not only healthy watershed functions but vibrant and livable human communities as well. Council programs employ local contractors, purchase local materials, and have positive economic impacts on the area's economy. Additionally, as the natural resource industries decline in the area, tourism and the influx of retirees become increasingly important. The Council's efforts to restore the area's ecosystems and to strengthen local communities all contribute to an area that is more livable and inviting. Finally, the Council has and will continue to partner with organizations working specifically on sustainable economic development and can help to create connections and partnerships which will further a sustainable economy in the area.

Organizational Structure

The strength of the Siuslaw Watershed Council lies in its collaborative structure. The Council provides a forum for the people and organizations of the Siuslaw, to come together to address issues of watershed health. None of the Council's programs could exist or succeed without partnerships. The following figure illustrates the Council's collaborative nature.

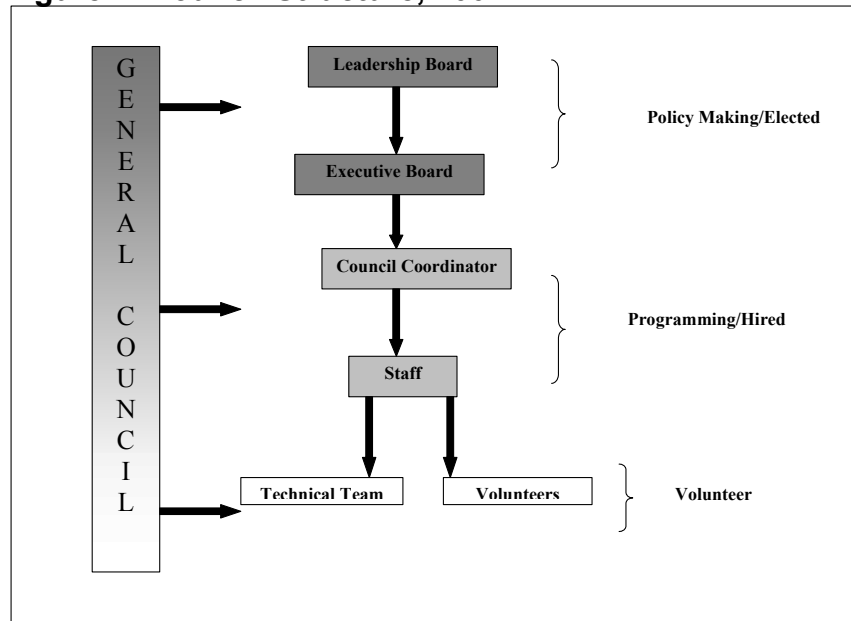
Figure 1. Council Collaborations, 2004



Source: Siuslaw Watershed Council, 2004

Internally, SWC's structure is equally based in community input and collaboration. As shown in Figure 2, the Council's general members form the foundation of the organization. Each year, 25 Council members are elected to serve on a Leadership Board, each representing a stream-sub-basin or interest group in the watershed. The Leadership Board then elects 9 of its members to serve on an Executive Board. The Executive Board meets once each month to provide both fiscal and organizational direction to the Council Coordinator and Staff. The Council's Technical Team is a volunteer group made up of natural resource professionals from around the region who meet once each month to provide staff and the Coordinator with technical oversight on all Council restoration projects. Finally the Council is strengthened and supported by its large volunteer base.

Figure 2. Council Structure, 2004



Source: Siuslaw Watershed Council, 2004

Chapter 2

Market Analysis

The Siuslaw Watershed Council provides a forum for the people of the Siuslaw River Basin to come together and contribute to the sustainable management of their watershed communities. As a collaborative, consensus-based non-profit, the Council is strengthened by the human, ecological, and fiscal resources of the entire watershed. At the same time, the organization is susceptible to any threats to the area's landscape, economy or sense of place. As the Council creates its vision for the next 10 years and seeks to fulfill its mission, it must remain aware of the external "landscape" within which it operates. To succeed, the Council must be responsive to demographic changes, changes in its partnerships and collaborations, and shifts in funding and political trends, etc. This chapter briefly describes: the communities served by the Council; the Council's collaborators and funders; and external trends that the Council must consider.

Communities Served

The 500,000+ acres of the Siuslaw are relatively unpopulated and include several small communities, most of which are unincorporated. The largest of these communities include: Florence, Mapleton, Lorane, Deadwood, and Triangle Lake. Florence is the watershed's largest community and has a growing population of more than 7,000. The majority of the watershed falls into Lane County and yet, the characteristics of Siuslaw communities do not necessarily mirror those of Lane County, or of Oregon as a whole.

Table 1. Population Characteristics, 2000

	Oregon	Lane County	Florence	Triangle Lake
Population	3,541,500	329,400	7,263	2,355
Median Household Income (dollars)	40,916	36,942	30,505	28,727
Median Age (years)	36.3	36.6	55.8	42.8
% of Population with Bachelor's Degree	25.1	25.5	17.5	14.6

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

Table 1 compares basic population characteristics of Oregon and Lane County to Florence and Triangle Lake, the only two watershed communities with large enough populations to be identified specifically

in the Census. The table illustrates that Florence and Triangle Lake both have a lower median income, a higher median age, and a lower educational attainment than either Lane County or Oregon. This tends to be the case in many rural communities, as the youth, the wealthiest and those with the highest educational opportunity, tend to follow jobs to larger urban areas. This trend can be seen within the County itself as the County's incorporated areas saw a 1.6% annual, average growth rate between 2000 and 2003 while its unincorporated areas saw a -1.5% annual average growth rate during the same period.

Table 2. Employment, 2000

	Oregon	Lane County	City of Florence
Management/Professional	33%	32%	23%
Services	15%	16%	31%
Sales/Office	26%	26%	23%
Farming/Fishing/Forestry	2%	1%	2%
Production/Transportation	15%	16%	10%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

As for employment, Oregon and Lane County have similar employment patterns while Florence has a higher percentage (nearly a third) of its population working in the service sector. This is significant to the Siuslaw watershed as Florence is its largest employment and population center. Service-based economies tend to offer lower wage jobs, jobs without benefits, and jobs that can be highly seasonal.

Partners/Collaborations

The watershed Council model is based on the creation and nurturing of strong partnerships. All council projects rely on the support of numerous partners. Restoration projects are designed and implemented in conjunction with agencies, the Tribes, and organizations. Education programs depend on the support of local schools, natural resource professionals and local businesses. Finally, sustainable economic development efforts depend on the cooperation of other non-profits and local jurisdictions. While adopting a collaborative approach can be time-consuming and challenging, it strengthens the council's projects. Tapping into a diverse skill and resource pool improves final outcomes while the process of developing positive collaboration strengthens community relations. It also ensures that there is a broad base of support for the watershed council.

Currently, the watershed council participates in and is strengthened by varied partnerships with the following entities:

- **Federal:** Siuslaw National Forest and the USFS, Bureau of Land Management

- **State:** Siuslaw Soil and Water Conservation District, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Forestry
- **Tribes:** Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians
- **Local:** landowners and citizens, Siuslaw and Mapleton School Districts, Siuslaw Institute, Port of Siuslaw, Salmon Trout Enhancement Program, local and regional timber industries, Lane County government, Ecosystem Workforce Program, McKenzie River Trust, Nature Conservancy.

Funding

Historically, the Siuslaw Watershed Council and councils across the state were heavily dependent on funds from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). OWEB's support has traditionally supported the majority of council operating costs and a large percentage of its on-the ground restoration projects. The Council's relationship with OWEB is extremely important as it keeps the Council's restoration activities closely tied to the priorities of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. OWEB's long-time support and guidance have allowed SWC to develop into a functioning and collaborative organization.

At the same time, the Siuslaw Watershed Council has a mission that presents a holistic vision of watershed health and that seeks to improve not only the ecological health but also the social/community health of the Siuslaw. In order to fulfill its holistic mission and to safeguard its long-term sustainability, the Siuslaw Watershed Council has worked to diversify its funding base. It currently operates as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and is eligible to receive funding from a variety of sources. It has recently received support, either in grant funds or as in-kind support, from the following entities:

- **Public:** Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, USFS, BLM, Siuslaw Soil and Water Conservation District, US Fish and Wildlife Foundation, National Forest Foundation
- **Private:** Oregon Community Foundation, US Bank, Diack Ecology Foundation, private donors and members, local businesses.

The Siuslaw Watershed Council will continue to work to diversify its funding base and to anticipate shifts in funding availability. Funding will continue to be effected by shifting trends in demographics, economics, and politics.

Significant Trends

- **Funding tied to restoration of specific species** while Council's mission is focused on restoration of holistic watershed health
- **Insufficient funding for watershed restoration** forcing the Siuslaw to compete for declining base of funding
- **Changing environmental conditions** outside the watershed that may impact many ecological factors including fish populations⁹
- **Holistic watershed restoration presents a complex challenge** that is difficult to explain concisely and even more difficult to accomplish
- **Watershed settlement patterns that are relatively inflexible** with existing ownership, land-use, or transportation corridors that must be worked around when planning coordinated restoration projects¹⁰
- **Shifting demographics** due to loss of local jobs and downturn in the economy, but that also include a growing retiree population
- **Lack of economic opportunity** due to a loss of fishing, and timber jobs and a general decline in agricultural industries. Service jobs are increasing but they typically pay less and are less secure¹¹
- **Depressed economy** that affects all Oregon communities and that forces the Council to compete with an increased number of organizations for a decreasing base of fundin.
- **Economic pressures on natural resource industries** force many large industrial timber companies to harvest tress as soon as they become economically useful, while market for large logs continues to diminish. Small, family owned forests are often able to practice alternative management practices that have a lighter impact on the watershed
- **Challenge to develop and strengthen a lasting partnership with County governments.** The Council's work

⁹ Siuslaw Watershed Assessment, <http://www.inforain.org/siuslaw/>

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

to support and contribute to healthy local communities is heavily tied to the community development work being done at the County level. The Council hopes to develop a cooperative relationship with Lane County's government and to work together for the benefit of the Siuslaw

Chapter 3

SWOT Analysis

Introduction

As part of its strategic planning process, the Siuslaw Watershed Council completed a SWOT Analysis. The Analysis identified the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and allowed Council staff and members to recognize both the organization's assets and its shortcomings. At the same time, the analysis process asks stakeholders to consider both the opportunities and threats existing in the external environment. This is especially important as no organization operates in a bubble and changing external factors, both positive and negative, should always be considered in an effective long-range planning process.

The results of the SWOT Analysis become the foundation for the Council's strategic goals and objectives. Recognizing internal and external strengths and weaknesses allows the Council to shape goals that are both realistic and visionary.

Methodology

The following findings were compiled with input from Council staff, members of the Executive Board, and from Council members. Input was solicited through a web-based chat board and at a monthly Council meeting. Findings were consolidated in order to be concise and for clarity. The results are not listed in any order or ranking.

Stakeholders were given the following definitions to guide the input process:

- **Strengths:** positive aspects *internal* to the organization
- **Weaknesses:** negative aspects *internal* to the organization
- **Opportunities:** positive aspects *external* to the organization
- **Threats:** negative aspects *external* to the organization

SWOT Analysis Findings

Strengths

The following list highlights the Council's assets and abilities. It provides a summary of internal strengths; strengths which can be sustained and nurtured. Overwhelmingly, the strengths identified point to the Council's strong and diverse base of volunteers, members, and partners. It is clear that the Council serves as a forum for the people of the Siuslaw watershed and could not operate without the collaboration of other local entities. The analysis also highlights the Council's ability to envision, plan and accomplish successful projects, thanks to years of experience and collaboration. Stakeholder input pointed to the Council's positive reputation and increasing visibility within the watershed community. Another strength identified was the Council's commitment to watershed education. Finally, both the staff and members recognized that key components of the Council's sustainability are its current tax status as a certified non-profit, affordable office space (rented from the US Forest Service) and its existing office equipment, all of which are necessary to accomplish its mission.

The following list includes all identified **Strengths**:

- S-1) Dedicated and steadily growing base of members
- S-2) Years of experience in watershed enhancement activities
- S-3) Active Executive Board and active past Board Chairs
- S-4) History of accomplishing successful projects
- S-5) Positive attitude as part of organizational culture
- S-6) Local participation in projects
- S-7) Strong Council Coordinator/Leadership
- S-8) Retention of core group of volunteers – continuity
- S-9) Established network of natural resource professionals
- S-10) Positive public image
- S-11) Diverse and multi-talented membership and broad representation
- S-12) Gaining a reputation as a model for successful collaboration
- S-13) Beginning to achieve name recognition
- S-14) Ability to visualize and accomplish projects
- S-15) Provide forum for people to come together and learn from each other

- S-16) Education as a high priority
- S-17) Summer Estuary Exploration Camp as successful education program
- S-18) Consensus-based decision making keeps people involved in Council
- S-19) Steadily diversifying funding streams
- S-20) Expansion of education and monitoring programs
- S-21) Established volunteer-based, non-regulatory water-quality monitoring program
- S-22) Exceptionally high level of volunteerism
- S-23) Increased commitment to long-range planning
- S-24) Affordable office facility
- S-25) Basic computers/office equipment available for staff
- S-26) Non-profit status

Weaknesses

The next portion of the SWOT Analysis identified the Watershed Council's weaknesses or organizational challenges. Through the input process, staff and stakeholders identified these areas as ones which could be improved in order to ensure the Council's effectiveness and long term sustainability. While many of the weakness are affected by the external environment, they are internal challenges which should be addressed in long-range plans.

In summary, stakeholders identified the need to involve more community members, both to lighten the load on existing volunteers and to ensure diverse representation of watershed communities. The analysis process also highlighted the Council's constant struggle to secure funding and to diversify funding sources to ensure long-term sustainability. The process identified the challenge of operating an effective organization using a consensus based, decision making process. However, it was also recognized that consensus strengthens final decisions. Lastly, the input pointed out a challenge which many organizations face when trying to address problems holistically – the potential loss of focus and broadening of the Council's mission.

The following list includes all identified **Weaknesses**:

- W-1) Low attendance at some monthly meetings

- W-2) Areas of the watershed are geographically isolated and present outreach challenges
- W-3) Constant struggle to secure funding
- W-4) Aspects of consensus-based decision making as a challenge
- W-5) Core group of volunteers is over-worked
- W-6) Small number of paid staff with no funding for more
- W-7) Need to provide more support and recognition to volunteers
- W-8) Breadth of mission creates challenge (comments made that “mission lacks specificity” and “potential loss of focus on primary mission”)
- W-9) Need more dedicated members
- W-10) Members seem to be drawn to the center and there no longer seems to be representation from either extreme
- W-11) Need to broaden name recognition at local level
- W-12) Need to pro-actively and regularly invite un-represented interest groups to participate
- W-13) Poor communication between Leadership Board members and their alternates – one should represent at each Council meeting
- W-14) Grant money as unstable source of funds
- W-15) Lack of available training opportunities
- W-16) Challenge to collaborate with other regional Councils
- W-17) Lack of internal use of existing Geographic Information Systems technology
- W-18) Non-visible location of Council facilities
- W-19) Age/condition of office equipment

Opportunities

The SWOT Analysis process also allowed stakeholders of the SWC to examine the external environment within which the Council operates. Staff and members were asked to think about what external opportunities exist that the Council currently capitalizes on or should consider. The list also suggests changing external trends which many have a positive impact on the Council and its projects.

To summarize, a major opportunity identified by Council staff and members was the cooperative nature of regional agencies,

organizations, schools, and landowners. The Council is a collaborative organization by nature and it could not achieve its mission of holistic watershed health without positive community cooperation. The analysis also highlighted the growing public awareness of issues of watershed health that should ultimately increase Council participation and community support.

Secondly, input suggested that the Council currently fills an existing community need to have a say in local natural resource management and to have some type of community forum. Finally, stakeholders identified a potential opportunity that could develop as the regional population demographics shift to include and higher percentage of retirees. Retirees are traditionally a population which traditionally is, has time to volunteer, and may be interested in providing financial support. This segment of the population could become increasingly important to the Council.

The following list includes all identified **Opportunities**:

- O-1) Cooperative attitude of local agencies, schools, landowners
- O-2) Growing availability of diversified funding
- O-3) Need for community group that brings people together
- O-4) Growing base of people in community looking to volunteer
- O-5) Large natural resource base
- O-6) Growing regional awareness of issues of watershed health
- O-7) Connection to the University of Oregon
- O-8) Alternative sources of staffing through volunteer, service-based organizations
- O-9) Positive relationship with Siuslaw SWCD
- O-10) Long-term partnership with local schools
- O-11) Growing retiree population
- O-12) Popularity of area as recreation destination increases community interest in maintaining and improving watershed health
- O-13) Watershed's proximity to Eugene, a major population center increases potential resources for Council programming

Threats

Lastly, the SWOT Analysis process asked staff and members to identify external factors or trends that may hinder the Council's pursuit of its mission. These threats should be seriously considered as the Council designs and implements its goals. They are not identified to necessarily be roadblocks but the Council should be proactive in responding to threats in order to ensure that the organization remains viable and effective.

In summary, the threats that were identified were largely related to shifts in both funding and political priorities at the federal, state and regional level. The Council is threatened by decreased funding from its primary funding source, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. As OWEB receives reduced funding from the state, this will have an impact on the SWC and organizations across the state. Staff and members identified the challenge of diversifying its funding base to ensure financial viability. Currently, the Council is over-worked to keep up with requirements and deadlines of existing sources and struggles to locate and cultivate new sources.

Any fiscal threat is heightened by political trends, mainly the potential de-listing of the Coho salmon and shifting political priorities away from endangered salmonids. The Council also recognizes the challenge they face to strengthen relationships with local government officials, a challenge which must be over-come. This threat is closely related to another, specifically the threat posed by the public perception of the Council as regulatory, a misconception which potentially decreases diverse public support and cooperation. Finally, the Council, along with other local organizations, faces the challenge of "rural flight." As jobs become scarce in rural areas, an increasing number of people, especially those who are young and educated, leave rural areas to find work in urban centers. This presents a challenge to the Council as it seeks to increase its membership and volunteer base.

The following list includes all identified **Threats**:

- T-1) Dependency on funding from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
- T- 2) Majority of funding tied to recovery of specific species while Council mission has focus on holistic, watershed health
- T-3) U.S. Forest Service may sell office space
- T-4) Reduced state funding to OWEB
- T-5) Re-prioritizing public interests
- T-6) Outsiders may see Council as "extreme environmentalists"
- T-7) Challenge to strengthen relationship with County government

- T-8) Public perception of Council as regulatory
- T-9) Council perceived as “fish-centric”
- T-10) Council ill-prepared for shifting trends in federal funding priorities
- T-11) Political pressure to cut funding to Councils
- T-12) Need to diversify funding while maintaining strong relationship with OWEB
- T-13) Challenge to maintain/build relationships with one-time funders
- T-14) Economic/social impact of closure of last mill in the watershed
- T-15) Shift in demographics due to loss of jobs in rural areas
- T-16) Holistic mission presents challenge to appeal to any one sector for funding

Chapter 4

Goals and Objectives

Chapter 4 provides the Siuslaw Watershed Council with a framework and a guiding document to shape future projects and programs. The Chapter begins by restating the Council's mission and defining four strategic areas that are key components of the mission. In each strategic area, a system of organizational goals and objectives are presented which define priorities for the Council. The goals offer a broad vision of what the Council would like to achieve in accordance with its mission. The policies provide more specific direction on how the Council will implement the goals.

It is essential to clearly define the relationship between the mission statement, strategic areas, plan goals, and objectives. They are defined as follows:

- The *Mission Statement* is a statement of the organization's reason for existence. It defines who the organization is, what it does, who it serves, and what it can accomplish. It is a broad statement that forms the foundation for all goals and objectives and yet it is broad enough that it will not need to change unless the community environment changes.
- The *Strategic Areas* identify the key components of the mission and allow the goals and objectives to be categorized. The strategic areas should only be considered as statements of support for the broader mission statement.
- *Goals* are designed to drive objectives and they represent the general end toward which an effort of the Council is aimed. Goals identify how the Siuslaw Watershed Council will implement its mission over the next ten years.
- *Objectives* are the specific steps or processes used to accomplish the organizational goals. Objectives can also be further defined through specific action steps outlined elsewhere in annual Council work plans.

Mission Statement

To reiterate from Chapter 1, the following is the mission statement of the Siuslaw Watershed Council:

The Siuslaw Watershed Council supports sound economic, social, and environmental uses of the natural and human resources in the Siuslaw River Basin. The Council encourages cooperation amongst public and

private watershed entities to promote awareness and understanding of watershed functions by adopting and implementing a total watershed approach to natural resource management and production.

Goals and Objectives

The mission statement guides the Council's holistic approach to improving watershed "health." Based on the mission, the Watershed Council's goals and activities can be broken down into four strategic areas: the environment, community outreach and education, economic development, and organizational development. In the day to day working of the Council, there is no clear separation between these focus areas. Goals in each area affect goals in every other area. However, for the sake of clarity, it has been helpful to make the separation.

STRATEGIC AREA: ENVIRONMENT

Consistent with its mission, the SWC has identified the "Environment" as a strategic area of focus. The Council has created 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 E-1 Continue to expand restoration efforts to address regional ecosystem needs.

Objective E-1-A: Address point and non-point sources of water pollution with the goal of improving water quality in order to meet tribal, state, and federal standards.

Objective E-1-B: Continue to partner with local non-profit to support and expand native plant nursery.

Objective E-1-C: Continue and further expand annual Native Plant and related support activities.

Objective E-1-D: Improve, Restore and Maintain stream habitat in the Siuslaw Watershed.

Objective E-1-E: Continue fish passage enhancement project with a goal to identify and remove all fish barriers in the watershed.

Objective E-1-F: Complete noxious weed assessment/prioritization process and launch removal projects when funding allows.

Objective E-1-G: Capitalize on restoration opportunities with willing landowners.

GOAL E-2 Expand monitoring and data inventory programs.

Objective E-2-A: Increase awareness of toxics/pollutants through community outreach and education.

Objective E-2-B: Integrate Geographic Information Systems (GIS) into project and data tracking.

Objective E-2-C: Expand Water Quality monitoring program and coordinate with other agencies that are also monitoring.

Objective E-2-D: Complete a watershed-wide, water quality assessment.

Objective E-2-E: Complete an updated biological assessment.

GOAL E-3 Strengthen and develop collaborations with state, federal, and regional agencies, tribes, non-profit organizations, schools, and County governments currently engaged in local restoration efforts

STRATEGIC AREA: COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Consistent with the 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, and special events. Outreach and education activities will be strengthened through collaboration with local and regional entities involved in complimentary activities.

GOAL C-1 Continue and expand education efforts to increase a local understanding of issues of watershed health.

Objective C-1-A: Expand Stream Team Program to include other schools, other grade levels, and possibly adult audiences.

Objective C-1-B: Expand Summer Estuary Camp to involve more local youth.

Objective C-1-C: Hold public tours of estuary and watershed restoration projects.

Objective C-1-D: Partner with local agencies, organizations and businesses to support the development of a Water Trail along portions of the Siuslaw River.

GOAL C-2 Increase volunteer involvement in SWC programs and events.

Objective C-2-A: Aggressively seek and network to find community members and local professionals willing to volunteer in support of the Council's mission.

Objective C-2-B: Develop research, internship, and thesis opportunities for university students and work with university departments on student outreach.

Objective C-2-C: Ensure volunteer retention and satisfaction.

GOAL C-3 Further develop role of Leadership Board members.

Objective C-3-A: Encourage and support Leadership Board members to serve as active liaisons between local interest groups and Watershed Council.

Objective C-3-B: Further engage Leadership Board members in committees and as volunteers.

GOAL C-4 Encourage public participation in Council activities through Council meeting attendance and increased participation in Council events.

Objective C-4-A: Ensure that all meetings are announced to the public and invite the public to attend.

Objective C-4-B: Plan monthly Council meetings to be accessible to the general public and, when possible, to have educational component.

GOAL C-5 Increase local recognition of the Council, its activities, and its accomplishments.

Objective C-5-A: Increase public awareness of specific Council activities through newspaper, radio, Internet.

Objective C-5-B: Continue to publish and distribute monthly newsletter and look for ways to broaden readership and expand content.

Objective C-5-C: Upon development of final SWC logo and "look," use consistently in all outreach and publicity.

Objective C-5-D: Ensure that website is kept current and shares outreach "look."

GOAL C-6 Develop collaborations and partnerships with local organizations, agencies, and governments to increase capacity in all local groups.

Objective C-6-A: Develop networking opportunities with other watershed councils, SWCD's, agencies, governments, non-profit organizations and businesses.

Objective C-6-B: Create opportunities to share skills and facilities where possible. (This might include shared office space, shared storage space, sharing a fiscal manager, sharing monitoring equipment, sharing web design skills, graphic capabilities, GIS capabilities, etc.).

Objective C-6-C: Share outreach opportunities with appropriate local partners.

STRATEGIC 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.

Goal ED-1: As a Council, develop a working vision of what a "restored" economy would look like.

GOAL ED-2: Identify and encourage sustainable economic opportunities that currently exist in the watershed, while working to develop new opportunities.

Objective ED-2-A: Promote sustainable grazing practices that are also economically feasible.

Objective ED-2-B: Encourage local recreation opportunities and tourism industries that support a sustainable economic base, while remaining compatible with wise use of local natural resources.

Objective ED-2-C: Support the creation and sustainability of local, family wage jobs.

Objective ED-2-D: Strengthen partnerships with other local entities and organizations working on economic development issues.

Objective ED-2-E: Support the development of markets for under-utilized and secondary forest products that fall within the category of sustainable use.

GOAL ED-3: Develop increased local jobs through the development and growth of a “restoration economy.”

Objective ED-3-A: Create employment directly with Council through growth in programming.

Objective ED-3-B: Support local businesses, contractors and organizations through restoration based activities.

Objective ED-3-C: Seek to be innovative in the field of “restoration job” development and partner with organizations currently working in this direction.

GOAL ED-4: Serve as a conduit between funding sources, businesses, and local landowners in order to encourage economic development.

Objective ED-4-A: Encourage and support contacts between regional lending institutions interested in supporting sustainable business ventures and local entrepreneurs.

Objective ED-4-B: Encourage and support contacts between funders and local landowners to fund restoration-based improvements on private land that increase land values.

STRATEGIC AREA: ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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 OD-1: Work to diversify funding streams to include funding from state, federal, and private funding sources with an aim of decreasing dependence on any single source and improving long-term organizational sustainability.

Objective OD-1-A: Create a Fundraising Committee, involving members of both the Executive and Leadership Board, in order to develop annual fundraising plan and to assist staff in meeting the goals of the plan.

Objective OD-1-B: Hold annual membership drive with a goal of retaining existing council members and soliciting new members.

Objective OD-1-C: Consistently encourage donations above and beyond annual membership fees.

GOAL OD-2: Devote staff and Board time and resources each year to complete both short and long-range planning activities.

Objective OD-2-A: Revise and update strategic plan/business plan annually.

Objective OD-2-B: Create yearly action plan and work-plans.

Objective OD-2-C: Create annual budget and fundraising plan to meet this budget.

Objective OD-2-D: Every 3-5 years, revise long-range plan to capture 5-year vision and to guide development of annual strategic/business plans.

GOAL OD-3: Create “Record Management Policy” for all electronic and paper records and data and keep policy updated to meet Council needs.

GOAL OD-4: Ensure that finances are managed to meet annual auditing standards while being clear and transparent and consistent with all applicable laws.

GOAL OD- 5: Further develop, clarify, and institutionalize an “organizational structure.”

Objective OD-5-A: Participate in annual review and update of bylaws for the Organization and the Board as part of annual planning process.

Objective OD-5-B: Create and adhere to written and formally adopted policies regarding hiring, fiscal, and management practices.

Objective OD-5-C: Clarify specific roles and responsibilities at all level of Council structure.

Objective OD-5-D: Create appropriate Committees to focus on various focus areas within the organization, including but not limited to fundraising, outreach, annual planning, etc.

GOAL OD-6: Ensure appropriate Board and staff development opportunities to educate, retain, develop and attract Board members.

Objective OD-6-A: Develop training opportunities for existing staff and Board members in order to build skills and comfort and to increase organizational capacity.

Objective OD-6-B: Encourage and develop activities such as retreats, trainings, and sabbaticals that strengthen and sustain staff and Boards.

Objective OD-6-C: Network in the community to recruit appropriate new Board members that reflect the diversity of the watershed to ensure community representation.

Objective OD-6-D: Review terms of Board members and set limits to encourage and ensure Board diversity.

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