



MONTANA ASSOCIATION of CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Strategic Plan: 2022 to 2027

This plan was approved at MACD's January 2022 Board Meeting.

The development of MACD's strategic plan was guided by input from Montana's conservation districts, gathered through surveys and focus groups. This process was supported by Terry Profota from Sage 4 Success Nonprofit Consulting.



Sage 4 Success, LLC
Nonprofit Consulting
practical, effective & experienced

Our Vision:

Our vision is for Montana's Conservation Districts to be the local leaders for voluntary natural resource conservation throughout Montana.

Our Mission:

MACD's mission is to support Montana's conservation districts in promoting and maintaining a landscape where soil, water, and other natural resources are conserved and utilized for the benefit of all Montanans in cooperation with landowners, state, federal agencies, and other partners.

"Supporting and representing Montana's Conservation Districts"

Our Values:

Teamwork and Engagement: Promote an environment where we work together and support one another in a solution oriented manner, incorporating flexible and innovative approaches.

Transparency: Conduct activities with integrity and honesty through open communications and accountability.

Respect: Forge mutual respect among MACD, districts, partners, and public officials.

Excellence in Stewardship: Foster responsible, efficient, and thoughtful use of all resources – financial, human, and natural.

Our 2027 Strategic Vision:

By 2027 MACD will have:

- created operational sustainability;
- unity and collaboration among all conservation districts and MACD;
- strengthened its partnerships and relationships;
- and increased the engagement and ability of Montana’s Conservation Districts to have local impact by developing and providing a suite of valued services, programs, educational opportunities, and advocacy work.

We will do this by:

- Having an active, engaged, and empowered board focused on MACD governance;
- Valuing robust district and employee engagement within a culture of respect, transparency, and teamwork;
- Reinforcing and building strong and productive partnerships;
- Creating consistency through the development and implementation of operational and board policies, processes, and plans;
- Developing a reputation for accountability and strong financial management and oversight;
- Expanding and strengthening conservation districts’ ability to impact locally through grant-making, programming, tech support, education, and advocacy;
- Generating new revenue opportunities and funding streams for conservation districts and MACD;
- Consistently promoting the importance and impact of conservation districts to public welfare and quality of life; and,
- Growing MACD’s staff capacity and satisfaction to provide excellent service and value.

2025 GOALS AND STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE OUR 2027 VISION (Three year plan)

1. BOARD AND GOVERNANCE

GOAL: In three-years, MACD will have an active, revitalized board of directors with infrastructure and systems in place to meet government required fiduciary responsibilities.

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Review and approve MACD's vision, mission, and values.
- Review and modify board processes and operations for engagement and to encourage "the next generation" of board members.
- Develop and use an annual board governance calendar.
- Develop a committee structure, based on nonprofit best-practices (Executive, Finance, Governance/Board Development) to help the board meet its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
- Create advisory councils to increase member engagement.
- Develop an executive director goal-based annual evaluation system.
- Create a written board job description and expectations of engagement.
- Strengthen new board member onboarding and orientation process.
- Create policy directing district engagement, based on currency of dues payment.
- Rethink director communication and outreach to their areas.
- Reach out to Tribal Conservation Districts and identify how MACD could be of value to them and engage them in membership and governance.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL: In three years, MACD will have strengthened our operational structure by creating written policies and procedures to provide consistency in board, staff, and organizational operations.

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Complete merge of financial records and information.
- Revise, clarify, and organize the current committee system to ensure meaningful participation of district supervisors and employees.
- Review and simplify the resolution process to ensure follow-through and tracking of initiatives.
- Review and/or modify current operating manuals or procedures and create those that are needed.

3. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

GOAL: In three-years, MACD will have implemented financial structures and oversight to strengthen our financial recordkeeping, budgeting, transparency, and management reporting systems.

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Develop and activate a Finance Committee.
- Develop financial policies and procedures, including a policy and procedure for drafting annual budgets.
- Outline an annual financial calendar to make sure all reports and filings are completed on time.
- Create systems to ensure compliant grant management and reporting.
- Review fiscal sponsorship and accounting checks and balances for Bridger Plant Materials Center process and procedures and modify as needed.

4. GRANTS, PROGRAMMING & TECHNICAL SERVICES

GOAL: In three-years, MACD will have strengthened and expanded our value and support to conservation districts through grant-making, programming, and operational administrative and technical support.

Grant-making. We do this to streamline funding for conservation districts by providing easy access to state, federal and other monies.

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Create a title for all funding MACD receives and distributes.
- Develop policies regarding fund acceptance, distribution, MOUs, and reporting structure.
- Develop next five-year MCPI agreement, starting 10/2022, focusing on increasing capacity through project funding with a component for CD staff time.
- Investigate other revenue sources for Conservation District benefit.

Programming. We do this to support conservation districts and partners in implementing conservation strategies and programs in their areas.

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Collaborate with partners to leverage capacity and resources to increase district services, programming, and implementation of on-the-ground conservation.
- Host a meeting with key partners to discuss programming overlap and distinction.
- Define the purpose and scope of work for the Programming Committee.
- Review current programs, services, and partnerships to determine real and perceived value by CD's. Revise any/all to maximize value or eliminate programs.
- Identify new programs adding value to CDs, including review and feasibility of Soil Corps Program through 1-year AmeriCorps Planning Grant.

Operational Administration and Technical Support. We do this to assist conservation districts in expanding and leveraging their ability to do their work effectively and efficiently.

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Develop more cooperative resource programming such as TechSoup Software purchases and shared Zoom accounts.
- Identify additional areas where MACD can support CDs with human resource capacity and develop services to leverage districts' ability to function effectively.

5. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

GOAL: In three-years, MACD will have developed educational opportunities for conservation districts that provide for professional growth, increased competencies, and effectiveness.

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Develop a plan for district sharing of programs and information (peer-to-peer learning).
- Coordinate training resources and opportunities provided to districts by partners to ensure needs are met, including the creation of a training calendar.
- Collaborate with partners to identify and provide professional education classes for conservation districts.

6. ADVOCACY

GOAL: In three years, MACD will have created relationships, systems, and partnerships, to effectively influence conservation efforts through education and advocacy of policy makers, conservation districts, and the public. *Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:*

- Engage Legislative Committee year-round to monitor federal actions that will influence conservation districts in Montana, and engage in policy issues from the local to national levels when needed.
- Develop process to prioritize policy and advocacy action for MACD, based on resolutions, time-sensitive issues, relevance, and the political landscape.
- Clarify how policy decisions are made when there is not a resolution/policy already in place.
- Better engage conservation districts in advocacy and policy work.
- Develop plan and strategies for 2023 legislative session that include a process for gaining legislative support to appropriate stable funding to conservation districts (examples: mill levies and state transaction fees).
- Review current communications with policy makers/legislator's feedback and modify to ensure valuable content.

7. COMMUNICATIONS

GOAL: In three-years, MACD will have developed communication strategies and structures that support transparency, strong relationships, and engagement with conservation districts, partners, and the public. *Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:*

- Review all communications and re-organize for efficiency, value, and expediency.
 - Review district feedback and modify MACD communications to ensure valuable content and best use of MACD financial and staffing resources
 - Review website content and create policy on what will be posted on site and what is available upon request.
 - Strengthen engagement and connection with CDs
- Review overall technology strategy, with particular focus on vulnerabilities and long-term viability of the WordPress multi-site.
- Develop literature that clearly articulates the value MACD provides to districts.
- Develop a more defined process for districts to give feedback to MACD.
- Review current communications with partners and modify to ensure valuable content.
- Develop a statewide public campaign, including updating/creating promotional materials about CDs, who they are and what they do. Target newspapers and other media.

8. REVENUE DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: In three-years, MACD will have improved current funding streams and developed new sources of revenue through expanded grant opportunities, corporate and private support, and increased capacity of local conservation districts to raise money.

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Develop new MACD programs to support conservation districts' effectiveness and income streams.
- Develop annual fundraising goals and plans that include appeals, website giving, and individual and corporate sponsors.
- Review MACD's website and update for donor convenience.
- Develop a written donor thank-you system.
- Implement contact and funder management system.
- Build capacity to develop funds by hiring a FT fund development staff person.

9. MACD STAFFING

GOAL: In three-years, MACD will have maintained a positive and supportive work environment in the MACD office through the creation of job descriptions, infrastructure, and sufficient qualified, trained, and competitively compensated staff to administer programs and manage the organization.

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Develop current and future staffing charts outlining hiring priorities.
- Review, update, and/or develop job descriptions.
- Review and/or modify current operating manuals or procedures and create those that are needed. ● Develop a staff annual evaluation process.
- Research salary ranges for comparable job positions and then develop strategies to secure income to provide competitive salary and benefits and retain outstanding staff.
- Budget funds to provide training for staff to improve their job competencies.