



North Santa Clara Resource Conservation District An independent special district of the State of California

To: NSCRCD Board of Directors
From: Stephanie Moreno, Executive Director/District Clerk
Subject: Staff Report for Item 6: *Megan Fluke, Consultant, will present the completed SWOT Analysis; discussion and possible action to accept the SWOT Analysis.*
Date: February 5, 2025

Executive Director Recommendation:

1. Adopt the SWOT Analysis as presented.
2. Direct the Executive Director to draft a plan to address operational recommendations that fall outside the scope of a long-range plan as defined by Division 9 (Recommendations 1, 3-5, and 8-9) for Board consideration at its March 5, 2025 meeting.
3. Consider next steps for the development of the District's 2025-2030 long-range plan during agenda item 8.1 on the February 6, 2025 Board agenda.

Background:

At the March 2024 Board meeting, Executive Director Moreno requested feedback from the Directors as to how they envisioned the process for the update of the District's 2019-2024 Long Range Plan. During the discussion, then-Director (now Board President) Frank Maitski suggested the District consider completing a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis as a pre-cursor to the update. In October 2024, the Board approved execution of an agreement with consultant Megan Fluke to conduct the analysis. Ms. Fluke conducted internal stakeholder interviews and external stakeholder surveys between October 2024 and January 2025, and the draft analysis was posted on the District's website on January 28, 2025 in anticipation of the February 6th Board presentation and discussion.

Although a SWOT analysis and a long range plan are both important tools for strategic planning, they serve different purposes and functions. A SWOT analysis is a diagnostic tool that helps identify the internal and external factors affecting an organization. It provides a snapshot of the current situation by assessing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in order to inform decision-making and help in identifying areas of improvement. A long range plan is a strategic planning document that outlines an organization's goals and actions over an extended period of time. It is a forward-looking document that sets specific, measurable goals and strategies to achieve them. In practice, a SWOT analysis is often used as a precursor to a long-range plan, providing insights that inform the goals and strategies developed in the long-range planning process.

The contents and timing of the District's Long Range Plan are dictated by Division 9 of the Public Resources Code, which is the enabling authority for California's resource conservation districts

(RCD). It only mandates the development of a long range work plan if an RCD intends to submit requests for funding to the State Department of Conservation.¹ However, if an RCD does choose to develop a long range work plan – regardless of whether or not they plan to request funding from DOC – it triggers legislative requirements and establishes the plan’s functions as follows:

1. Identification of resource issues within the district for purposes of local, state, and federal resource conservation planning.
2. Establishment of long-range district goals.
3. Provision of a framework for directors to identify priorities for annual district activities.
4. Provision of information to federal, state, and local governments and the public concerning district programs and goals.
5. Setting forth a basis for evaluating annual work plan achievements and allocating available funding to the district.
6. Involvement of other agencies and organizations in the district planning process in order to help ensure support in implementing district plans.

Discussion:

During review of the SWOT recommendations to determine those which could inform long range planning efforts, it was recognized that a number of them more closely relate to District operations rather than the functions identified in Division 9. Those specific recommendations are:

#	Recommendation
1	Document and implement succession plan to preserve institutional knowledge
3	Document systematized grant pursuit processes
4	Explore additional funding mechanisms including fee for service and bond measure possibilities
5	Document project selection criteria to balance opportunities with capacity.
8	Design systematic approach to enhance visibility and communications
9	Clarify environmental justice policy success metrics in the context of recent Executive Orders

Given that the long range planning effort is estimated to take 6-9 months to complete and these recommendations are either of a time-sensitive nature or would better inform long range planning if implemented in a short timeframe, it is recommended that the Board consider develop a separate plan for implementation of these recommendations.

During Ms. Fluke’s presentation on the results of the SWOT analysis at the February 6th meeting, Directors and other meeting participants will be given an opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions. Ms. Fluke has recommended the following presentation objectives for the Directors to consider:

- Did anything in the analysis surprise you? If so, what?

¹ PRC Section 9084.

- Do you think any part of the analysis should be edited for clarity?
- Which of the analysis recommendations should be prioritized?
- Do you recommend additional actions beyond the analysis recommendations?
- What are your remaining questions?

The Board has a choice of adopting the SWOT analysis as presented or suggesting amendments to Ms. Fluke for consideration prior to finalization and adoption.

Summary:

The District's SWOT analysis has been completed and the results are being presented to the Board at its February 6, 2025 Board meeting. The Executive Director is recommending that the Board consider implementing some of the recommendations separately and in advance of the anticipated completion date for the District's long range plan. After the presentation concludes, it is recommended that that Board adopt the analysis as presented, but it also has the option to suggest amendments for consideration prior to finalization and adoption.