

FUNDING

PSCDs are nimble organizations in forming partnerships that can be funded in a number of ways:

- RCW enabled systems of Rates and Charges and Special Assessments
- State and federally funded grants and cost-share
- Coordinated investments with local jurisdictions
- Strategic partnerships with philanthropic organizations
- Charitable donations through Title 26 USC (Internal Revenue Code) – Section 170(a)(1)

This broad funding portfolio has served PSCDs over many decades to deliver long-term investment in our agricultural and rural communities – essential partners in protecting and improving the resiliency of our aquatic and upland resources.

Additional funding and investment in the PSCD system would accelerate Puget Sound Recovery through:

- Coordinated investments to address multiple resource concerns with a positive net-gain in farm-fish-flood communities.
- Cost-share funding for public/private partnerships with landowners / managers such as farmers to support implementation of water-quality and fish and wildlife habitat protection and enhancement projects on private property.
- Community investment initiatives such as the King CD Regional Food System Grant Program that leverage public/private investments at a rate of 2:1 to ____.
- Regional community engagement initiatives such as the annual Dairy Summit and innovative research and demonstration projects through Incubator Farm and Discovery Farm approaches to ____.
- Regionalized programs and services to ensure consistent and baseline delivery levels of programming and technical assistance Puget Sound-wide.
- Collective Impact-focused outreach and engagement through the PSCD Better Ground initiative.



A SHARED VISION

The Puget Sound conservation districts have formed a collaborative regionally focused Caucus.

Our shared vision is a future in which private land managers and local residents are actively engaged in building community, stewarding natural resources, and playing an essential role in restoring and maintaining a healthy and productive Puget Sound and Salish Sea.

Our shared mission is to support and strengthen the 12 Puget Sound conservation district and partners to foster community-scale and individual stewardship ethic. PSCDs share staff and resources to support local economies and restore, enhance and maintain the natural resources of Puget Sound through a non-regulatory, incentive-based approach.



Puget Sound Conservation Districts
Working with you and other land
stewards for Better Ground

Local food ~ Healthy forests ~ Clean water

pugetsoundcd.org and
betterground.org



BETTER GROUND

SMALL ACREAGE FARM SERVICES

WHO WE ARE

The twelve PSCDs are uniquely positioned to engage private land managers in land stewardship practices that address regional natural resource priorities. PSCDs are aligning core programs and services to recover the health of Puget Sound, and increasing capacity to deliver these programs and services across the region. Within the suite of core PSCD programs and services, the Small Acreage Farm Services Program provides a pathway to protect and enhance Puget Sound for current and future generations.

PSCDs are:

- Non-regulatory
- Community based and locally led
- Accessible
- Strategic
- Results driven and focused on shovel-ready projects
- Cost-effective

PSCDs offer:

- Coordinated, certified and trained professionals. We lend best available science, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) technical standards, peer training and certification networks, and a high level of quality to our projects.
- Uniquely positioned, special purpose districts that engage private landowners and managers in stewardship practices to address both local and regional resource conservation issues.
- A strategically aligned collective of interdisciplinary experts, scaling proven programs and services in a cost-effective way.

WHAT WE DO

- Work with private landowners and managers on a volunteer basis to improve the soils and waters of our region.
- Enable implementation of small farm best management practices and long-term sustainability by providing technical assistance and cost-share funding for projects.
- Provide regional outreach and education through the PSCD Better Ground initiative.
- Beta test Puget Sound-wide program pilots to test practices and approaches that address significant regional issues (ground water, air quality, nutrient management, etc.) and that can be used across the state.



THE SMALL ACREAGE AND LIVESTOCK PROGRAM

SMALL ACREAGE FARM SERVICES

PSCDs' Small Acreage Farm Services Program focuses on the protection of Puget Sound. This Program raises awareness of the direct link between farm management, water quality of habitat impacts, and identifying and implementing solutions for improving these resources. Typical farm

resource issues include but are not limited to unmanaged livestock access to streams, wetlands and other waterways; overgrazing; soil fertility depletion, compaction and erosion; and management of nutrients, fecal coliform bacteria and other pollutants in surface and ground water.

HOW WE WORK

OUR STAFF

Landowners PSCD Small Acreage Farm Services Program staff is comprised of experts in their fields, including licensed Professional Engineers and technicians versed in Climate Resiliency, Farm Planning, Habitat Restoration, Low-Impact Development and Community Engagement.

OUR PROCESS

PSCDs continue to embrace the conservation district systems' collective heritage of supporting resource conservation in rural communities and on agricultural lands. PSCDs build relationships with small acreage farm operators through a cooperative approach that balances landowner goals with community-based resource management priorities. These non-regulatory guidance-based relationships are built on trust, respect and a commitment to shared understanding and multi-benefit outcomes.

NRCS STANDARDS & BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE

PSCDs facilitate resource conservation on small acreage farms through a planning process that utilizes Best Management Practices (BMPs) developed and field tested by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and its associated research facilities and land grant colleges. The NRCS system of BMPs is built upon a dynamic process that refines and updates Technical Standards and tools based on the latest Best Available Science. NRCS Technical Standards are recognized by environmental management agencies and courts across the United States as the accepted standards for resource management on agricultural lands.

PSCD PLANNING PRODUCTS

Conservation districts have a state-wide farm planning process that is utilized by every district where farm planning services are provided. PSCDs are collaborating to develop a "special purpose" small acreage farm management planning product to assure our respective planning products for this stakeholder group are consistent in process and aligned to address regional priorities. Additionally, PSCDs utilize the NRCS resource management system of farm planning (RMS). This is the most comprehensive conservation planning process



available to farm operators and is most commonly applied to planning efforts in collaboration with commercial operations and operations that meet the definition of Confined Animal Operation.

The PSCDs' special purpose small acreage farm management planning product differs in scope but not in quality from RMS plans. An operation with large numbers of livestock that are confined for significant periods necessarily requires more exhaustive assessments, analyses and complexity of BMP solutions applied than a landowner with a small herd of horses or cows. Proportionately, the PSCDs' special purpose planning product achieves water quality protection and fish and wildlife habitat enhancement goals on small acreage in an economical manner. Furthermore, a number of counties have incorporated this standard farm plan format into their Critical Areas Ordinances to achieve GMA level resource protection and enhancement priorities.

Where possible, PSCDs partner with the NRCS to design and implement structural BMPs on small acreage farms. These practices are commonly designed by PEs to deliver a much higher level of performance than would be prescribed when utilizing other technical standards. Designing and building to this higher standard delivers the federal government a very high level of insurance against liability for future failure. In cases where small acreage farms do not generate enough income to qualify for NRCS support, other technical standards are available for use by PSCD PEs.

OUTREACH AND MARKETING SYSTEMS

PSCDs are using social marketing research, regional branding campaigns, online education and community networks through the PSCD regional initiative, Better Ground.

PSCDs also utilize a variety of education tools and programming to support adult and youth education on agricultural-related resource management topics. PSCDs hold hundreds of peer-to-peer education and training opportunities such as Farm Tours, and reach thousands of youth through in-class and field-based programming each year.

STRUCTURAL BMPs & LICENSED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER DESIGNS

PSCDs have one or more professional engineers (PEs) in house. These PEs are commonly shared within "clusters" of PSCDs to distribute their support and meet the demand for engineered solutions throughout the PSCD system. PSCD PEs and staff work with local jurisdictions to develop and pre-approve designs for structural BMPs, thereby expediting some permitting processes. Additionally, PSCD PEs bring their knowledge regarding BMP analysis and design to facilitate the placement of structural BMPs at a rate and scale that benefits regional resource conservation priorities within the contexts of local building codes and permit requirements.

