

**Recommended Time Frame for  
Completing the Long Range Plan  
Fiscal Years 2015 to 2019**

Dec. 13 / Jan. 14 – Gather & update natural resource inventory data. Develop needs assessment identifying top 5 natural resource concerns. Identify trends impacting natural resources and strategies to address trends.

Feb. / March 14 – Develop/review/modify Mission & Vision. Develop core values.

April 14 –           Develop Natural Resource Priorities & Goals  
                          Develop Information – Education Priorities & Goals

May 1, 2014 – Final day to submit LRP draft to Commission for Review

May / June 2014 - Development of Joint Plan of Operations (Actions & Strategies to meet goals of Long Range Plan)

May 15, 2014 – Receive comment on LRP back from Commission

May 15 – 30, 2014 – Incorporate recommendations from Commission Review of LRP

June 1 – 15, 2014 – Conduct Public Hearing on LRP

June 15 – 30, 2014 – Incorporate public comments into LRP

June 30, 2014 – Distribute LRP and submit final LRP to Commission

June 30, 2014 – Final day to submit Joint Plan of Operations (annual plan) to Commission

July 1, 2014 – New LRP in place for 5 years

It is time to begin preparing the Long Range Plan for Fiscal Years 2015 – 2019. A draft of the plan must be submitted to the Commission for review on or before May 1, 2014. Additional information will be provided regarding format after the OACD Area meetings this fall.

The following is a description of a process you should use to assist you in developing the district's plan. I would encourage you to set a timeline for each of the phases so that you may complete your plan by the deadline.

The planning process should integrate a visioning process by district directors and staff as well as involvement of key stakeholders interested in conservation throughout the District. The plan should involve the following stages (defined in the next section).

### **BENEFITS: Why Build a Plan?**

- ✓ To stimulate forward thinking and clarify future direction.
- ✓ To improve performance.
- ✓ To solve major organizational problems.
- ✓ To survive – even flourish with less.
- ✓ To build relationships, particularly with external stakeholders and customers.
- ✓ To build team work and expertise.
- ✓ To influence rather than be influenced.
- ✓ To meet funders' requirements.

- Phase One: Initial Planning Process
- Phase Two: Mission & Vision Statement
- Phase Three: Inventory of Renewable Natural Resources & Update of social, economic, and demographic data
- Phase Four: Needs Assessment, Resource Trends, and Organizational Assessment
- Phase Five: Long-Term Goals
- Phase Six: Performance Measures (Objectives)
- Phase Seven: Actions & Strategies
- Phase Eight: Public Comment

## **PROCESS:**

### **Phase One – *Initial Planning Process***

The plan should contain input from all interested individuals, groups, entities, or agencies (local, state, or federal). The district may consider hosting a meeting for local “opinion leaders”. Local opinion leaders might include, but are not limited to, community leaders, county commissioners, school district board members, ministers, farm organization representatives, environmental organization representatives, or other agency personnel.

Information can also be gathered from the local work group or locally-led and outreach meetings.

### **Phase Two - *Review of the Mission & Vision Development***

A review of the districts mission: what it does, how it does it and for whom. The mission statement defines:

1. The underlying reason for existence.
2. The business we are in – what we tell people we do.
3. Represents the present.

The vision will answer the question: “For what significant contribution to the quality of life in Oklahoma does the \_\_\_\_\_ Conservation District want to be known for in the coming five (5) years?”

The vision defines:

1. The future we want to create.
2. What we want people to see when they look at the district, our programs, and activities 3 – 5 years from now.
3. Represents the future.

### **Phase Three – *Inventory of renewable natural resources and Update of social, economic, and demographic data***

A thorough yet concise description of the renewable natural resources within the district should be included in the plan. This information, along with the social, economic, and demographic data should be relevant and current to the subject. When maps, charts, graphs, and tables are used they should be up-to-date and of good quality with the source of information referenced appropriately.

Contact Shellie Willoughby with the Information-Technology Division if you need assistance in generating district maps. Some of the maps that can be generated include (but are not limited to): roads, streams, upstream flood control sites, school districts, general census data, and general land forms.

**Phase Four – *Organizational and Needs assessments, resource trends, and current issues***

To prepare the organizational assessment, analyze the organization's strengths (what's working well?) and weaknesses (what's working poorly?). Review resource trends and current issues to determine if they are:

- Likely to have impact on the district's ability to carry out its mission;
- Ones to which the district must respond to in an orderly fashion through the use of human and financial resources;
- Ones over which the district may reasonably expect to exert some influence.

From the information gathered above you will then begin to determine what are the needs of the district and will become the basis for establishing your long-term goals.

**Phase Five – *Long Term Goals***

The district will develop the "declarative statements that define outcomes or results to be achieved at some point in the future". Goals are definitions of conditions that are different from what currently exists. They are the general areas where things will be made to happen in order to direct the district toward a vision. Goal are ideas or concepts that will serve as benchmarks, or landmarks, from which the district may judge its work and its health.

**Phase Six – *Performance Measures (a.k.a. Objectives)***

Phase Five efforts will be directed toward developing quantifiable statements that describe the specific work that will be performed in an effort to meet the long term goals identified in the previous phase. Performance Measures, or objectives, are achievable – all things being equal – and shall be used to determine what progress the district is making toward meeting its goals.

**Phase Seven – *Actions & Strategies***

Actions and Strategies take into consideration the Goals and Performance Measures of the district, and prioritize them, through scheduling and budgeting processes, to meet the needs of the district. The "who" is going to do "what" by "when" and "how" type of statement is often the format used in writing strategies. The actions/strategies may change from one planning cycle to another and should have a direct tie to the Joint Plan of Operations.

**Phase Eight – *Public Comment***

Once you have received your draft plan back from the Commission review, the district must hold a public hearing on the plan draft. Refer to Chapter 2, pages 12-13 of the *Conservation District Handbook* on further instructions for conducting the public meeting.

**SUMMARY:**

An investment of time and participation by the district directors and staff in this process is an integral part of its successful achievement. The district needs to be committed to planning for the fulfillment of the organization's fundamental purposes. This includes:

- Establishing and clarifying purpose;
- Deciding on goals, and strategies whose attainment will help fulfill purpose; and
- Determining the major means and pathways to pursuing goals and strategies.

I hope that you will make the plan a real working document. Enclosed is a suggested time frame for completing the long range plan. If you need assistance in plan development in specific areas, please call upon the appropriate Commission staff. Do not overlook local and state NRCS personnel as a valuable resource in developing your plan. If you have any questions concerning the long-range plan please contact me.