



## **Mancos Conservation District 3-Year Plan (2023 to 2025)**

For More Information Contact: District Manager: Neva Connolly at 970-533-7317

### **Organization of the Mancos Conservation District**

Conservation Districts are political subdivisions of the State of Colorado -The authorities; powers and structure are contained in Colorado Revised Statutes, Title 35, Article 70. The Mancos Conservation District was organized under the authority of the Colorado Soil Conservation District law. The Mancos Conservation District was established on August 31, 1948. Tourism, farming, timber, and ranching constitute the major industries in the Mancos area.

### **Function of the Mancos Conservation District**

The District supports agricultural producers and land managers by providing technical assistance, financial, and educational resources with regard to the conservation of water, soil, and related natural resources.

### **Mission of the Mancos Conservation District**

The mission of the Mancos Conservation District is to promote the long-term sustainable use and protection of the natural resources of the Mancos River Watershed by providing educational opportunities for residents and financial and technical assistance to landowners and managers seeking to meet conservation goals.

### **Trends Impacting Conservation in the Mancos Conservation District**

- Increase in resilient soil health, forest, and range management practices
- Improvement of understanding of conservation practices
- Increase in efficient and lawful water usage
- Improve sustainability and profitability for small and large land managers
- Decline in generational sustainability and a lack of estate succession plans for agricultural producers
- Increased negative impacts of climate change and drought

### **Natural Resource Data (list)**

Land Ownership: 61,400 acres privately owned; 68,400 acres US Forest Service; 23,800 acres Bureau of Land Management; 1,700 acres County and State land; 700 acres Bureau of Reclamation.

Land Usage: 16,000 acres irrigated hay fields and pastures; 400 dry cropland; 45,000 acres range and woodland. Conservation Easements: 5,500 acres in conservation easements.

### **Prioritized Natural Resource Issues & Goals**

#### **Watershed Health**

**Goal:** Improve watershed health through education, partnership collaboration, and opportunity identification to build resiliency in the watershed.

**Objective 1:** Lead in the growth and continued engagement of the Mancos Watershed Group to ensure we have community led conservation for future generations.

**Objective 2:** Continue to address concerns and projects identified in the 2011 Mancos Watershed Plan.

**Objective 3:** Lead the collaborative effort to create the Mancos Watershed Stream Management Plan.

**Objective 4:** Create and facilitate educational opportunities that connect individuals to watershed literacy.

### **Water Quality and Availability**

**Goal:** Improve water quality and availability through conservation practices, education, and on-the-ground projects.

**Objective 1:** Continue with education and outreach through partnerships, programs, and workshops.

**Objective 2:** Continue to improve irrigation infrastructure in the Mancos Watershed and research future projects through collaboration with ditch and reservoir irrigation companies.

**Objective 3:** Continue to monitor the water quality and availability in the Mancos Watershed. Maintain our partnership with CPW River Watch program and report current water conditions to stakeholders.

**Objective 4:** Continue partnerships and opportunities for additional storage in the Mancos Watershed.

### **Soil Health**

**Goal:** Improve soil health through conservation practices that support resilient and productive ecosystems.

**Objective 1:** Provide educational opportunities, equipment, and financial incentives to increase soil conservation.

**Objective 2:** Monitor soil health and quality through participation in the STAR Plus program and other soil health initiatives.

### **Forest Health**

**Goal:** Improve forest health through conservation practices that prioritize fire adaptation and natural resiliency.

**Objective 1:** Collaborate with partners to create a holistic framework of the Mancos Watershed-Forest Ecosystem.

**Objective 2:** Facilitate in the creation of conservation plans that promote healthy forest stands.

**Objective 3:** Prioritize and implement projects that provide cross-boundary benefits to both private landowners and public lands.

### **Natural Resource Information/Education Priorities and Goals**

**Goal:** Improve access to educational opportunities for natural resource conservation by increasing community connection and understanding of watershed dynamics.

**Objective 1:** Continue to share resources with the public through our website, social media, printed materials, and public interaction.

**Objective 2:** Continue to develop partnerships that increase community dialogue and education across age groups based on prioritized natural resource issues and goals.

### **Conservation District Operational Goals & Objectives**

**Priorities:** Communicate our organization's mission, vision, and values that concern natural resource issues in the Mancos Watershed through collaboration with landowners and

organizations.

**Goal:** Mancos Conservation District will have organizational systems, policies, and procedures to ensure the Board of Supervisors and staff can effectively accomplish our mission.

**Objective 1:** Continue to provide official public documents upon request.

**Objective 2:** Continue to encourage both Board Supervisor and staff professional development

**Objective 3:** Continue to research and acquire funding that is available for accomplishing our resource goals

### **Staffing Needs:**

The Mancos Conservation District has up to seven active and dedicated board members; each member is a volunteer and spends time on a project assigned or chosen. The board follows state statutes and governs the District and its staff, while being the voice of the local landowner and carrying out the mission of the MCD. The Mancos Conservation District currently has a staff of dedicated people working toward the same conservation goals, including an executive director, district manager, watershed coordinator, two district conservation technicians, and an AmeriCorps VISTA.

### **Acronyms**

BLM-Bureau of Land Management  
CCI-Community Consensus Institute  
CSU-Colorado State University  
CPW-Colorado Parks and Wildlife  
CWCB-Colorado Water Conservation Board  
DWRP-Dolores Watershed Resilient Forests  
HDCD-High Desert Conservation District  
HMI-Holistic Management Institute  
IWM - Irrigation Water Management  
MLC-Montezuma Land Conservancy  
MPL-Mancos Public Library  
MSD-Mancos School District  
MSI-Mountain Studies Institute  
MWCD-Mancos Water Conservancy District  
NACD-National Association of Conservation Districts  
NAU-Northern Arizona University  
NPS-National Park Service  
NRCD-Natural Resources Conservation Services  
SWCD-Southwestern Water Conservation District  
TNC-The Nature Conservancy  
TOM-Town of Mancos  
USACE-Army Corp of Engineers  
USDA-United States Department of Agriculture  
USFS - United States Forest Service  
WAP-Wildfire Adapted Partnership  
WIP-Water Information Program

**MANCOS CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**Natural Resource Goals & Objectives**  
 Long Range Plan for: 2023- 2025

**Natural Resource priority:** Watershed Health

**Why is this a concern and what is the location:** Our watershed is facing several concerns, including current and future conditions of the Mancos River, wildfire and fire mitigation, and watershed education.

**Three Year Goal(s):** Improve watershed health through education and partnership collaboration, identify opportunities for building resilience in the watershed, and finalize the 2025 Mancos Watershed Stream Management Plan.

<b>PROGRAM YEAR</b>	<b>MEASURABLE ANNUAL OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>COOPERATING AGENCY/GROUP</b>	<b>TIME AND FUNDING NEEDED</b>	<b>SOURCE OF FUNDING</b>
2023	Objective 1: Host 2 MWG meetings; create and send an annual Mancos Watershed Group newsletter Objective 2: Review projects and feasibility of Mancos Watershed Plan (MWP) 2011 Objective 3: Finish community consensus institute and summarize findings; begin outlining objectives for 2025 final draft of MWSMP Objective 4: Provide 4 workshops on watershed health/literacy for both children and adults.	DWRF, USFS, MSI, NRCS, TOM, MSD, MPL, TNC, CWCB, Community Consensus Institute, NPS	1,600 hours \$107,250	NACD, SWCD, CWCB, TNC
2024	Obj 1: Host one MWG community education event w/partners; engage additional community attendance at MWG meetings Obj 2: Rank and prioritize incomplete projects identified in MWP; Obj 3: Complete SMP scope of work; draft SMP based on CCI, MRAC, and community/partner feedback Obj 4: Provide 5 workshops on watershed health/literacy for both children and adults; develop outreach and education materials and social media materials.	DWRF, USFS, MSI, NRCS, TOM, MSD, MPL, TNC, CWCB, Community Consensus Institute, NPS	2,200 hours \$140,000	TNC, CWCB
2025	Obj 1: Host 2 MWG meetings; host SMP-based watershed festival Obj 2: Initialize identified projects from MWP; secure funding	DWRF, USFS, MSI, NRCS, TOM,	750 hours \$50,000	CWCB

	<p>for MWP update  Obj 3: Finalize SMP and develop outreach materials for SMP  Obj 4: Provide 6 workshops on watershed health/literacy for both children and adults, including SMP-based watershed festival; finalized set of 7 repeatable lessons, including materials.</p>	MSD, MPL, TNC, CWCB, Community Consensus Institute, NPS		
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# Natural Resource Goals & Objectives

Long Range Plan for: 2023- 2025

**Natural Resource priority:** Water Quality and Availability

**Why is this a concern and what is the location:** Water is arguably the most valuable resource in the west. Current and future demands on water use and the availability of water in the valley is a concern watershed wide.

**Three Year Goal(s):** Build capacity for educational opportunities and partnerships that increase understanding of water quality and availability. Initiate and finalize projects to increase water delivery sustainability.

PROGRAM YEAR	MEASURABLE ANNUAL OBJECTIVES	COOPERATING AGENCY/GROUP	TIME AND FUNDING NEEDED	SOURCE OF FUNDING
2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Obj 1: Increase realtor education regarding water rights through partnership with WIP; host 1 IWM workshop; develop partnerships for environmental education and urban water conservation</li> <li>● Obj 2: Initiate nozzle exchange program; upgrade irrigation infrastructure so each ditch company reduces open-ditch delivery by 25% through targeted outreach; identify ditches that qualify for salinity BOR funding.</li> <li>● Obj 3: Launch live RW data viewing; onboard Mancos HS teacher for Site 405; publish annual RW report to stakeholders</li> <li>● Obj 4: Complete PL566 PIFR; begin Watershed Plan process; continue partnerships to increase water storage in Mancos Watershed</li> </ul>	NRCS, , USACE, CSCB(DCT), Ditch Companies, WIP, ToM, MPS, MPL	2,500 hours \$162,500	NRCS, CWCB, CSCB, SWCD, CHRF, Ditch Companies
2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Obj 1: Increase realtor education regarding water rights through partnership with WIP; host 1 IWM workshop; build partnership with MWCD; continue environmental education and urban water conservation partnerships</li> <li>● Obj 2: Finalize Field and Sheek projects; upgrade irrigation infrastructure to reduce open ditch delivery by 50%; install additional meters on 3 ditches; apply for BOR salinity funding; hold drip/micro irrigation workshop</li> <li>● Obj 3: Host workshop on how to use RW data website; publish annual RW report to stakeholders</li> <li>● Obj 4: PL566-continue working on Watershed Plans.</li> </ul>	NRCS, USACE, CSCB(DCT), Ditch Companies	5,000 \$650,000	CWCB, NRCS, Ditch Companies, MSI, RESTORE CO, USFW
2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Obj 1: Host SMP-based watershed festival; host a</li> </ul>	NRCS, USACE,	4,000 hours	CWCB, NRCS,

	<p>community meeting in partnership with MWCD, TOM, and others; host one IWM workshop; build partnership with MWCD; have self-sustaining environmental education and urban water conservation partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Obj 2: Upgrade irrigation infrastructure to reduce open ditches by 75%; install additional meters on 3 ditches</li> <li>● Obj 3: Recruit one more RW volunteer; continue collaborate with TOM on water quality and health projects</li> <li>● Obj 4: PL566-complete Watershed Plans.</li> </ul>	CSCB(DCT), Ditch Companies	\$250,000	Ditch Companies
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**MANCOS CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**Natural Resource Goals & Objectives**  
 Long Range Plan for: 2023- 2025

**Natural Resource priority:** Soil Health

**Why is this a concern and what is the location:** Improving soil health improves productivity, water conservation and quality. Mancos Conservation District is seeing a decline in soil quality in the area and this will lead to erosion, poor water quality and the flourishing of invasive weed species watershed wide.

**Three Year Goal:** Educate local landowners on the importance of soil health and increase soil health practices.

PROGRAM YEAR	MEASURABLE ANNUAL OBJECTIVES	COOPERATING AGENCY/GROUP	TIME AND FUNDING NEEDED	SOURCE OF FUNDING
2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Obj 1: Host one soil health workshop; investigate feasibility of local compost production; pursue grant funding to implement and incentivize soil health practices; develop educational outreach on soil testing options</li> <li>● Obj 2: Pursue funding for equipment to monitor soil health; pursue funding for baseline soil sampling throughout the watershed</li> </ul>	NRCS, CSU, CSCB, HMI, WARD LABS, USDA, HDCD	2,000 \$130,000	CSCB, NRCS, USDA RD
2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Obj 1: Host two soil health workshops; establish needs of equipment rental program to increase efficiency of use; develop soil health educational resources web page linking to soil map</li> <li>● Obj 2: Pursue funding and incentivization for producers implementing soil health practices; research grant funding to build local composting facility</li> </ul>	NRCS, CSU, CSCB, HMI, WARD LABS, USDA, HDCD	6,000 hours \$1,000,000	CSCB, NRCS, USDA RD
2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Obj 1: Host 3 soil health workshops; increase participation in workshops</li> <li>● Obj 2: Continue STAR Plus program; expand STAR Plus participants; pursue funding for soil sampling; establish STAR Plus participant mentorship program.</li> </ul>	NRCS, CSU, CSCB, HMI, WARD LABS, USDA, HDCD	7,000 hours \$1,000,000	CSCB, NRCS, USDA RD



**MANCOS CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
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 Long Range Plan for: 2023- 2025

**Educational priority:** Forest Health

**Why is this a concern and what is the location:** Healthy burnable forests provide wildlife habitat while protecting and sustaining our watershed. These resources are vital to the health and well-being of the Mancos community.

**Three Year Goal:** Improve forest health through conservation plans that prioritize fire adaptation and natural resiliency for private landowners and cross-boundary partners.

PROGRAM YEAR	MEASURABLE ANNUAL OBJECTIVES	COOPERATING AGENCY/GROUP	TIME AND FUNDING NEEDED	SOURCE OF FUNDING
2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Obj 1: Create framework for forestry projects; include healthy soils principles in fire mitigation work; finish fluvial hazard mapping; identify projects for COSWAP</li> <li>● Obj 2: Hire MCD forester; train DCTs in forestry practices; facilitate the creation of conservation plans in partnership with NRCS; establish partnership with NRCS to plan projects larger than 10-24 acres</li> <li>● Obj 3: Prioritize and rank COSWAP projects and begin implementation, including the development of a pre-monitoring program; develop one project that provides cross boundary benefits and obtain funding;</li> </ul>	USFS, DWRF, NPS, NRCS, CSFS, CPW, WAP	2,000 Hours \$250,000	COSWAP, FRWRM
2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Obj 1: Develop outreach on forestry framework and fluvial hazard mapping; begin implementation of wildfire-ready watersheds; continue forestry collaborations</li> <li>● Obj 2: Advertise to landowners MCD's capacity for forest management planning through targeted outreach</li> <li>● Obj 3: Expand major cross boundary forest project or obtain 50% completion; begin implementation of conservation plans</li> </ul>	USFS, DWRF, NPS, NRCS, CSFS, CPW, WAP	3,500 hours \$650,000	COSWAP, FRWRM
2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Obj 1: Develop educational programming and outreach specific to MCD's forestry projects</li> <li>● Obj 2: Implementation and finalization of landowner</li> </ul>		1,000 hours \$100,00	

	conservation plans; ● Obj 3: Complete major cross boundary forestry project; implement and finalize forestry projects; begin post-monitoring of completed projects			
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**MANCOS CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**Natural Resource Goals & Objectives**  
 Long Range Plan for: 2023- 2025

**Educational priority:** Natural Resource Information/Education Priorities and Goals

**Why is this a concern and what is the location:** Knowledge is power and we need to foster agricultural and natural resources education to the next generations to continue to build a strong community in both our natural and created habitat, whether urban or rural.

**3 year Goal:** Create a self-sustaining and knowledgeable community through educational opportunities and partnerships.

PROGRAM YEAR	MEASURABLE ANNUAL OBJECTIVES	COOPERATING AGENCY/GROUP	TIME AND FUNDING NEEDED	SOURCE OF FUNDING
2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Obj 1: Streamline and organize MCD website; create forestry and soil health web pages; expand MCD reach through social media; host 4 in-person educational workshops.</li> <li>● Obj 2: Continue to build partnerships with MSD, MPL, and TOM; foster community dialogue with CCI.</li> </ul>	CCI, MSD, MPL, TOM	500 hours \$32,500.00	
2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Obj 1: : Continue to update MCD website; host 5 in-person educational workshops; continue to expand MCD reach through social media</li> <li>● Obj 2: Re-evaluation and strengthen partnerships with MSD, MPL, and TOM.</li> </ul>	CCI, MSD, MPL, TOM	500 hours \$32,500	
2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Obj 1: Continue to update MCD website; host 6 in-person educational workshops; continue to expand MCD reach through social media</li> <li>● Obj 2: Foster self-sustaining partnerships with MSD, MPL, and TOM.</li> </ul>	MSD, MPL, TOM	500 hours \$32,000	



## RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION

THEREFORE, Be It Resolved that this Long Range Program of the Mancos Conservation District be adopted as the official program of the District as of this 9th day of January, 2023.

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Michael Nolan, President

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Scott Cox, Vice President

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Fred E. Brooks, Treasurer

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Jack Varcados, Member

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Gary Kennedy, Member

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Wayne Eppich, Member

Reviewed by the Colorado State Conservation Board

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Colorado State Conservation Board, President

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Cindy Lair, Program Manager

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Date

