**Virginia Association of Conservation District Employees (VACDE) STRATEGIC PLAN**

January 2022 thru December 2025

**Mission:** To provide professional development, leadership, and a voice for communicating issues and solutions on behalf of conservation district employees.

**Vision:** To be a professionally accepted and integrated workforce of employees dedicated to the conservation of natural resources.

**GOAL 1 - PROVIDE TRAINING, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RECOGNITION OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL EMPLOYEES**

Objectives:

1. Provide professional development opportunities to enhance the skills of all technical, educational, and administrative employees as well as directors and partner employees, during the summer and winter training sessions and other events as opportunities arise.
2. Encourage employee participation in non-VACDE opportunities that enhance skills and professionalism.
3. Sponsor awards recognizing district employees for length of service, outstanding accomplishments, best practices, and other successes.
4. Collaborate with DCR, VASWCD, and other partner agencies to strengthen conservation planning certification training by continually addressing staff needs for additional and consistent training in courses required to obtain conservation planner certification

**GOAL 2 - MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS**

Objectives:

1. Hold quarterly VACDE Board meetings to conduct association business.
2. Maintain VACDE Board position descriptions, financial records, policies, minutes, bylaws and other association documents and records in an organized manner and in a location accessible by all members.
3. Maintain financial accountability and conduct an audit of all monetary transactions annually.
4. Develop a Strategic Plan for 2026-2029 in 2025.
5. Prepare annual plan of work and an annual report.

**GOAL 3 - DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP IN ADDRESSING EMPLOYEE CONCERNS AND NEEDS**

Objectives:

1. Improve leadership of district managers and administrative staff by coordinating with the VASWCD Admin/Ops committee to provide opportunities for discussion and trainings specific to district management and administration.
2. Work with the VASWCD/DCR to encourage consistency between districts.
3. Conduct annual survey with members to obtain training needs and/or issues that VACDE could assist in addressing.

**GOAL 4 - IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE VACDE AND DISTRICT EMPLOYEES, DIRECTORS, VASWCD AND PARTNERS**

Objectives:

1. Use VACDE listserve and VASWCD website to communicate with members.
	1. Distribute minutes, newsletters, and annual reports.
	2. Update VACDE page on VASWCD website as needed.
2. Use interaction between Area Representatives and employees, share information and obtain feedback.
3. Encourage Area representatives to contact employees prior to and following quarterly VACDE board meetings.
4. Participate in VASWCD meetings and invite VASWCD members to VACDE meetings.
5. Submit quarterly reports to VASWCD.
6. Attend and participate in partner meetings and invite them to VACDE meetings as appropriate.

**GOAL 5: SUPPORT DISTRICT EFFORTS TO INCREASE THEIR FUNDING**

Objectives:

1. Work with VACDE partners to provide guidance and alternatives for increasing fundingthrough State sources, local governments, grants and self-generated funding*.*

**GOAL 6 - EXPAND VACDE MEMBERSHIP AND INCREASE FUNDING**

Objectives:

* + 1. Work with the VASWCD to encourage directors to: communicate the value of the VACDE’s work to districts; to encourage membership of their employees; to pay the membership fee for their employees.
		2. Investigate how other state associations have increased membership of employees, directors and partners and how they have funded themselves and implement ideas as appropriate
		3. Encourage membership and participation in trainings of employees, directors and partners.
		4. Support the VACDE Benevolence Fund through fundraising.

**GOAL 7- MAINTAIN AND BUILD PARTNERSHIPS**

Objectives:

1. Maintain membership with both National (NCDEA) and Southeast (SECDEA) Conservation District Employees Associations.
2. Educate membership about VACDE involvement and opportunities through NCDEA & SECDEA.
3. Send a representation to the Southeast Conservation District Employees Association (SECDEA) annual meeting in each year.
4. Have a representative serve on VASWCD committees and participate in initiatives or programs.
5. Provide support for VASWCD Educational Foundation’s annual fundraising auction.
6. Work as a liaison with DCR and NRCS to help coordinate training and certification programs.
7. Expand partnership with VCE, DOF and other traditional district partners.
8. Explore additional partnerships with non-traditional entities that can provide training and other opportunities for districts.