



San Benito Resource  
Conservation District  
**Strategic Plan 2025-2030**

**San Benito Resource Conservation District**  
**Strategic Plan 2026-2030**  
**Adopted July 7, 2025**

## **Introduction**

The San Benito Resource Conservation District (SBRCD) is a countywide district that operates pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 9000 et seq. SBRCD was formed in the mid-1940s when most soil conservation districts (the predecessor for RCDs) were formed. SBRCD is governed by a 5-member Board of Directors appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The RCD currently has executive and program staff, and a contracted bookkeeper. SBRCD also maintains 2 Associate Directors that are appointed by the Board of Directors. SBRCD does not receive direct taxes or fees from San Benito County and is majority funded through state, federal, and private foundation grants. The San Benito County Board of Supervisors has traditionally provided up to \$15,000 annually to the District towards service provision and has provided up to \$25,000 during the past 3 years. However, this is not an annually budgeted item for the County. The District's boundaries encompass 893,440 acres consistent with the County's boundary. The County landscape is characterized by agricultural, rural, wildlands, and urban land uses.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is a federal partner to the RCD through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), last updated in 2020. This relationship provides the basis for technical expertise and financial support (cost-share programs) from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) directly to landowners and land managers within the SBRCD's boundary. The SBRCD facilitates connections with NRCS and various types of assistance. The NRCS provides the RCD with office space and access to federal vehicles as part of an Un-funded Cooperative Agreement (UCA), updated in 2025.

The primary purpose of California's RCDs under Section 9001(a) of the Public Resources Code is the provision and adoption of conservation practices, including but not limited to farm, range, protected conservation lands, the wildland urban interface, wildlife, recreation, watershed, water quality and woodlands. RCDs specialize in locally led conservation work, and implement on the ground projects, provide technical assistance, and help educate the public to improve their local communities. Service provision and technical assistance for landowners can remain confidential.

The District operates with an annual budget of approximately \$300,000 with personnel consisting of a part time Executive Director, a full time Program Coordinator, and a part time contracted bookkeeper.

## Current Service Provision

### ***Working Landscape Services - These services are centered around giving landowners tools to steward the land.***

SBRCDC provides services related to agricultural conservation practices including soil health management, nutrient management, pollinator and wildlife habitat enhancement, and carbon farm planning. Services are provided on rangelands, irrigated agriculture, and vineyards. Agricultural programs are also provided to underserved farmers through bilingual assistance, including Chinese and Spanish, for on-farm conservation planning and practices and enrollment in government sponsored cost-share programs, and NGO technical and financial assistance. By providing these services in a consistent manner, SBRCDC aims to improve both the ecological and economic viability of agriculture in San Benito County, including farms, ranches, orchards, and vineyards.

### ***Landscape Resilience - These services deliver direct ecological benefits to the landscapes of San Benito County.***

SBRCDC provides services targeted towards making the landscapes of San Benito more resilient to the impacts of drought, floods, and wildfire. In this effort, SBRCDC has become a strong partner in conducting wildfire resilience planning and defining regional priorities, conducting pollinator and wildlife habitat programs, implementing water conservation practices, and conducting fish and wildlife conservation planning including a preliminary stream restoration assessment. SBRCDC also participates in initiatives related to wildlife connectivity in the region. SBRCDC conducts this work as a partner in the region, including seeking natural resource guidance and mentoring from tribal leaders in the County on specific projects and outcomes.

### ***Elevating Agriculture's Voice in San Benito County - These services are provided through participation in planning, needs assessments, and strategic engagement.***

SBRCDC provides services for immediate and future planning needs within San Benito County including San Benito County General Plan assistance, problem-solving for resource management topics, and responding to landscape conservation initiatives generated internally and externally from the community. SBRCDC is considered an experienced and important voice at the table in conveying the benefits of agriculture and working landscapes to the broader county.

**Community Outreach and Tribal Engagement** - These services are associated with SBRCDC's growing efforts to engage in community programming and events throughout the County. Tribal engagement has been a practice of the SBRCDC but efforts to formalize and explore activities and opportunities with tribes will be a future priority.

## **Strategic Plan Goals and Actions to Address**

This Strategic Plan is targeted to be actionable and efficient in relaying goals and primary actions to be completed during the 5-year period 2026-2030. This plan did not revisit the mission of SBRCO. The plan includes Administration/Operations, Governance, and Program goals. It identifies actions to be completed and associated costs for proposed actions.

**San Benito Resource Conservation District  
Strategic Plan - 2026-2030**

**ITEM: Operations/Administration**

**Goal 1: During the Strategic Plan period the San Benito Resource Conservation District is administratively operating at the California Association Resource Conservation Districts' (CARCD) recommended *Tier 1: Meeting Legal & Basic Requirements*.**

**Goal 2: San Benito Resource Conservation District is maintaining monthly financial reporting and invoicing on contracts and grants.**

**Timeline for Completion:** June 30, 2026

**Reporting Actions:**

1. Board is briefed monthly on progress towards Tier 1 standards via written memo.
2. Financials completed quarterly including invoicing update and receivables timelines.

**Staff Assigned:** Executive Director; Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper

**Key Assumption:** Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper is hired or contracted to complete actions between 11/1/2025- 6/30/2026.

<b>Strategic Plan Component: Administrative</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Timeline for Project</b>	<b>Staff Assignment</b>	<b>Progress Notes</b>
1. CARCD Tier 1 Standards are administratively completed and operational	\$5,000	[1] Tier 1 checklist is completed by Executive Director and Program Coordinator	Standing monthly report to Board of Directors	Executive Director	

<p>2. Financials are completed monthly; invoicing submitted according to contracts. Financials presented quarterly to Board of Directors</p>	<p>\$15,000</p>	<p>[2] Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper job description is created as employee or contractor.</p> <p>[3] Administrative Assistant is hired 11/15/2025</p>	<p>initiated end of Q 2 FY 25/26 <b>Due Dec. 2025</b></p>	<p>Executive Director</p>	
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**San Benito County Resource Conservation District  
Annual Work Plan - 2026-2030**

**ITEM: Operations/Administration**

**Goal 1: San Benito Resource Conservation District meets the primary natural resource needs of the community by maintaining staffing levels for service provision.**

**Goal 2: Develop a staffing plan consistent with Strategic Plan outcomes to manage towards sustainable program delivery.**

**Goal 3: Examine opportunities for establishing a strong Internship Program for attracting work force development students from local colleges to feed into staffing plan.**

**Timeline for Completion:** June 30, 2027

**Reporting Actions:**

1. Staffing plan is adopted by the Board of Directors.
2. 5-year costing plan is developed to provide direction for staff planning and recruitment options including training, mentoring and succession planning.

**Staff Assigned:** Executive Director, Program Coordinator, Board subcommittee

**Key Assumption:** Board and Executive Director initiate a Staffing Subcommittee to provide detail in development of staffing plan.

<b>Strategic Plan Component: Staffing Plan</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Timeline for Project</b>	<b>Staff Assignment</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Complete staffing plan to provide sustained delivery of RCD programs.	[1] Develop staffing structure to meet Strategic Plan Goals	Q 2 FY 25/26 <b>Due Dec. 2025</b>	Executive Director Board subcommittee	

Internship Program is developed and operational by FY 2030.	[2] Internship Program is developed with local work force development college programs and provides staff consistency and savings in personnel costs	Q 4 - FY 26/27 <b>Due July 2027</b>	Program Coordinator	
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**San Benito County Resource Conservation District  
Annual Work Plan - 2026-2030**

**ITEM: Governance**

**Goal 1: San Benito Resource Conservation District maintains a full slate of Directors and Associate Directors are strategically engaged to align with Board expertise and organizational goals and activities.**

**Goal 2: Maintain a Governance Committee of the Board of Directors to assess Board of Directors performance and goals annually, including planning for member term timelines.**

**Timeline for Completion:** June 30, 2030

**Reporting Actions:**

1. Governance Committee created and reporting to Board twice annually
2. Board of Directors Annual Review in September each fiscal year

**Staff Assigned:** Board President

**Key Assumption:** Executive Director works with Board President to assess Board of Director and Associate Director expertise needs and manages term timelines for recruiting.

<b>Strategic Plan Component: Governance</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Timeline for Project</b>	<b>Staff Assignment</b>	<b>Progress Notes</b>
Governance Committee is operational.	[1] Governance Committee works with Executive Director to maintain Board effectiveness	Q 3-4 FY 25/26 (Jan - June) <b>Due June 2026</b>	Board President Executive Director	

	to support the organization			
Annual Report Template is maintained by Board of Directors for reporting end of year results.	[1] Annual reporting helps Board align with organizational goals and determine impact	Q 4 FY 26/27 (April - June) <b>Due June 2027</b>	Board President	

**San Benito County Resource Conservation District  
Annual Work Plan - 2026-2030**

**ITEM: Programs - Building Awareness and Measuring Impact**

**Goal 1: San Benito Resource Conservation District is achieving enhanced community awareness about the services it provides to meet natural resource management needs in San Benito County through community outreach, community surveys, and targeted communications.**

**Goal 2: Program areas offered by the San Benito Resource Conservation District are accessible and well known to the San Benito community.**

**Goal 3: Establish and collect annual impact metrics for Programs and establish efficient methods for forecasting future needs.**

**Timeline for Completion:** June 30, 2029

**Reporting Actions:**

1. Resource management needs survey instrument is developed and made available online each year.
2. Quarterly newsletter is initiated and maintained as a primary community outreach tool.
3. Program adjustments are considered and built into program descriptions annually for seeking funding support.
4. Impact metrics are compiled each year and reported via service provision portion of the website.

**Staff Assigned:** Program Coordinator

**Key Assumption:** Programs are maintained in primary service areas of Working Landscapes and Landscape Resilience

Strategic Plan Component: Working Lands	Project Description	Timeline for Project	Staff Assignment	Notes
Clarity of Programs provision is achieved in communications and community knowledge of RCD offerings	[1] Programs description updated on the website and annually through online survey to inform alignment with community needs	Q 4 FY 25/26 (April - June) <b>Due June 2025</b>	Program Coordinator	
Programs review is conducted through outreach to agricultural community, conservation practitioners, landowners, and County offices	<p>[1] Reshape Local Work Group engagement and reportable outcomes for more alignment in service provision</p> <p>[2] Consider bringing San Benito Working Landscapes Group into a program administered by the SBRCD</p>	<p>Q 1 FY 26/27 (July - Sept.) <b>Due July 2026</b></p> <p>Q 2 FY 26/27 (Oct. - Dec.) <b>Due Dec. 2026</b></p>		

**San Benito County Resource Conservation District  
Annual Work Plan - 2026-2030**

**ITEM: Programs - Working Lands**

**Goal 1: The San Benito Resource Conservation District Working Lands Program implements best practices and tools for stewarding farms and rangelands.**

**Goal 2: Farm and rangeland managers are aware and participating in the Working Lands Program by 2029.**

**Goal 3: A 10% increase in service provision countywide is provided by the Working Lands Program by 2028.**

**Timeline for Completion:** June 30, 2029

**Reporting Actions:**

1. The Working Lands Program best practices and tools reflect primary focuses of federal and state natural resource management guidance.
2. Working Lands Program recruitment strategies are developed and implemented annually.

**Staff Assigned:** Program Coordinator

**Key Assumption:** Adequate funding is maintained during the Strategic Plan period.

<b>Strategic Plan Component: Working Lands</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Timeline for Project</b>	<b>Staff Assignment</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Clarity of Programs provision is achieved in communications and community knowledge of RCD offerings.	[1] Programs description updated on the SBRCD website annually	Q 4 FY 25/26 <b>Due June 2026</b>	Program Coordinator	

Working Lands Program is supported by state and federal funding reflecting consistency with current standards.	[1] Specific application to state and federal standards is clear for Working Lands Program	Q 1 FY 26/27 (July - Sept.) <b>Due Sept. 2026</b>	Program Coordinator	
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## San Benito County Resource Conservation District Annual Work Plan - 2026-2030

### ITEM: Programs - Landscape Resilience Program

**Goal 1: The San Benito Resource Conservation District Landscape Resilience Program is addressing ecological outcomes in San Benito County landscape.**

**Goal 2: The San Benito County Resource Conservation District Landscape Resilience Program responds to state and local landscape resilience policy and priorities and funding opportunities.**

**Timeline for Completion:** June 30, 2029

#### **Reporting Actions:**

1. The Landscape Resilience Program is a lead partner in implementing the Regional Priority Plan for San Benito wildfire resilience.
2. The Landscape Resilience Program supports habitat enhancement and restoration for pollinators, birds, and other wildlife on working and public lands, as well as wildlife connectivity across the region that includes San Benito County.
3. The Landscape Resilience Program includes clear definition of stream restoration opportunities and actions.
5. The Landscape Resilience Program is guided by tribal natural resource knowledge and practitioner mentoring.
6. The Landscape Resilience Program is networked with other practitioners including neighboring Resource Conservation Districts, San Benito County, land trusts, private landowners, private conservation lands, stormwater and water districts, universities, and NRCS to describe landscape scale outcomes and benefits.

**Staff Assigned:** Executive Director and Program Coordinator

**Key Assumption:** Adequate funding is maintained during the Strategic Plan period.

Strategic Plan Component: Landscape Resilience	Project Description	Timeline for Project	Staff Assignment	Notes
Landscape resilience is defined by actions that have scaling impact on varying geographies in San Benito County.	[1] Programs description updated on the SBRCD website to clarify Landscape Resilience Program goals and objectives and target ecological systems	Q 4 FY 25/26 (April - June) <b>Due June 2026</b>	Executive Director and Program Coordinator	
Timescale for landscape resilience may be years or decades.	<p>[1] Develop internal planning guidance on primary ecological systems of focus</p> <p>[2] Develop and cultivate partners for impact in improving ecological systems including maintaining long term monitoring and reporting</p> <p>[3] Consider joining models such as the Integrated Watershed Restoration Program with Monterey RCD and Santa Cruz RCD or other resilience consortiums that are created in the future</p>	<p>Q 1 FY 27/28 (July - Sept.) <b>Due Sept. 2027</b></p> <p>Q1 FY 28/29 (July - Sept.) <b>Due Sept. 2028</b></p> <p>Q1 FY 29/30 (July - Sept.) <b>Due Sept. 2029</b></p>	Executive Director and Program Coordinator	

## Funding Support for Strategic Plan Outcomes

The implementation period associated with this Strategic Plan is faced with mounting declines in federal funding for the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and specifically the Natural Resources Conservation District (NRCS). California will also be entering a period of declining revenues as well. During the preparation of this Strategic Plan, it is estimated that NRCS will experience a decline of \$807 million in funding and NRCS staffing would be reduced by a third to just 8,000 employees nationwide. Cuts to NRCS are primarily in Conservation Technical Assistance.

On the state side, California is prepared to begin funding outlays for Proposition 4, the voter approved Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024. SBRCD is positioned for alignment in spending of \$2.7 billion for FY 2025/2026 including major Proposition 4 categories captured below. Individual grant programs expenditures can be further aligned with SBRCD priorities once the California budget is adopted. The declines in federal funding should be of note for SBRCD and communications on these cuts may require notification from SBRCD to County leadership regarding agriculture support during the Strategic Plan period.

Other changes in California budgeting that could have significance is the shift in some permanent conservation programs to the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund instead of bond funding. This shift may provide smaller expenditures annually, but the tradeoff could be more consistent funding moving forward.

<b>Proposition 4 Category</b>	<b>Estimated Expenditure</b>	<b>RCD Program Alignment</b>
Wildfire and Forest Resilience	\$325 M	Landscape Resilience
Climate Smart Agriculture	\$134 M	Working Lands
Biodiversity and Nature-Based Solutions	\$286 M	Landscape Resilience

In general, during the Strategic Plan period SBRCD should strive to leverage funding received through local funds and philanthropic sources to build out a funding diversification plan. Contracted services should be part of this calculus, as well as philanthropic and venture investment strategies.