

Alabama Chapter Strategic Plan 2005-2009

Vision Statement

Our Members are committed, informed, effective conservation leaders. Members use the Alabama Chapter's multi-disciplinary nature and interdisciplinary structure to expand influence and to create and convey a vital conservation message that encourages and promotes a holistic environmental message to others. Chapter leadership positions provide institutional proving grounds for those who seek to strengthen their ability to contribute to conservation solutions within their own communities

Mission Statement

The mission of the Alabama Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society is to promote the wise use of soil, water, and other natural resources through scientific, educational, and service-oriented functions. The Alabama members promote a stewardship ethic that recognizes the interdependence of people and natural resources while meeting the needs of future generations. Through holistic planning, education, and example the Alabama Chapter promotes a stewardship ethic that recognizes the interdependence of people and natural resources.

Strategic Work Areas

- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
- **CHAPTER GROWTH AND INVOLVEMENT**
- **CHAPTER ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING**
- **PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION**
- **LEGISLATION, PUBLIC POLICY, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

Strategic Objectives

1. We will support the professional development of members and others through new and existing training programs, regular Chapter meetings, and certification opportunities.
2. Stimulate communication among workers in the field of natural resource conservation and other conservation fields for the mutual exchange of knowledge, facts, experience, and thought.
3. Encourage natural resource research, demonstration, and application.
4. Provide opportunities for presentation and discussion of natural resource issues. Join with other scientific and conservation groups in sponsoring field days, workshops, symposia and other similar events.
5. Provide a forum for interaction and coordination with non-agricultural and other natural resource interest groups in Alabama.

6. Foster natural resources education for the members, land users, schools, county and local government leaders that influence use and management of public property and the general public.
 7. Share environmental knowledge with appropriate legislative and rule-making bodies. Act to promote sound laws and regulations within the guidelines of a non-profit organization. We will be an advocate for legislation and public policy that promotes the conservation of natural resources through our own action and supporting the actions of others.
 8. Secure adequate funding to ensure the success of the Chapter's objectives, to provide a sound infrastructure for the chapter, to and support chapter functions.
 9. Increase membership growth and involvement through programs and services that meet or exceed member needs.
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OBJECTIVE 1.:

We will support the professional development of members and others through new and existing training programs, regular Chapter meetings, and certification opportunities.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Provide member professional development opportunities through quality educational programs
- Promote member involvement in agency training
- Support certification of Alabama Conservation Partnership in promotion of the CPESC program
- Offer certification tutorials and opportunities for testing
- Develop training courses for CPESC and localize training for Alabama
- Involve the Alabama Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts leadership in supporting certification of NRCS and District technical employees as CPESCS through a joint resolution
- Cooperate with other professional organizations in providing training and certification opportunities for technical service providers to the USDA-NRCS

STRATEGIES:

- A. Provide opportunities for additional and more comprehensive training for members.
- B. Examine the existing meeting structure to determine if we could better serve our membership.
- C. Provide training in programs that are of current importance, e.g. whole farm planning, watershed planning and evaluation, ecosystem based assistance, etc.
- D. Provide an opportunity for members and others to obtain certification as CPESC.
- E. Develop a new, in depth, Alabama CPESC tutorial, and offer training courses in erosion and sediment control.

- F. Explore partnering opportunities with Alabama Professional Engineers.
 - G. Actively promote the certification of NRCS, State Highway Department, and other construction professionals.
 - H. Maintain and enhance partnership with Auburn University's Technology Transfer Office in scheduling and conducting training desired by professionals in erosion and sediment control.
 - I. Coordinate with Crop Management Association, Auburn University Agronomy Department and other professional organizations as appropriate to provide training to potential technical service providers in the areas of nutrient management and conservation planning.
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OBJECTIVE 2.:

Stimulate communication among workers in the field of natural resource conservation and other conservation fields for the mutual exchange of knowledge, facts, experience, and thought.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Develop a Chapter vision and mission statement
- Develop a Chapter Strategic Plan for 2005-2009
- Improve communications with members and identify ways the Chapter can better serve members
- Establish a "Speaker Roster" of Chapter members

STRATEGIES:

- A. Identify ways the Chapter can better serve members and develop a feedback loop.
- B. Examine committee structure and investigate whether committees are functioning.
- C. Establish a speaker roster of experts in field of Natural Resources and make them available to community service groups, etc for programs.
- D. Develop or purchase display materials for presentation professional meetings of other professions related to natural resource conservation.
- E. Develop a marketing plan.
- F. Regularly publish a newsletter and distribute to all membership in either hard copy or electronic forms.
- G. Maintain Chapter web site to promote the SWCS and the Alabama Chapter's positions related to natural resource issues.

OBJECTIVE 3.:

Encourage natural resource research, demonstration, and application.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Support legislation that leads to enhancement of natural resource management and conservation research at educational institutions in the state.
- Support the individual researchers by providing assistance in test plots, physical labor and financial support.
- Develop a Chapter "skills bank" to assist researchers in natural resource management.

STRATEGIES:

- A. Canvass landowners/landusers to determine research needs and communicate those needs to researchers and offer research assistance to the researcher.
- B. Identify landowners/chapter members willing to work with University and private researchers in obtaining research data.
- C. Actively petition State Legislature for (continued/increase) funding for natural resource management.

OBJECTIVE 4.:

Provide opportunities for presentation and discussion of natural resource issues. Join with other scientific and conservation groups in sponsoring field days, workshops, symposia and other similar events.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Sponsor or Co-Sponsor one or more technical conferences on Soil and Water Conservation and erosion control each year.
- Develop partnerships with affiliation organizations.
- Sponsor or Co-sponsor wetland symposium
- Sponsor or Co-Sponsor one or more technical sessions annually on crop management.

STRATEGIES:

- A. Partner with ADEM, Corps of Engineers, USFWS, NRCS and others to sponsor Wetland symposium.
- B. Develop partnership with Alabama Professional Engineers to promote sediment and

- erosion control.
- C. Partner with Alabama Highway Department and County Engineers to promote sediment and erosion control
 - D. Develop partnership with other professional organizations, (e.g. ASAE, ASCE, ACIA, CCA, AECTF, PE, PSC, IECA, others) to promote and expand workshop and field day opportunities.
 - E. Identify and partner with organizations such as Weeks Bay National Estuary Program and Mobile Bay to form partnerships and alliances.
 - F. Partner with Alabama Crop Management Association (ACMA) to provide soil and water conservation training to members of ACMA and others who are Certified Crop Advisors.
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OBJECTIVE 5.:

Provide a forum for interaction and coordination with non-agricultural and other natural resource interest groups in Alabama.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Identify key personnel in Sierra Club, Alabama Environmental Council, Alabama Waterwatch, etc and similar organizations and partner where involvement promotes the objectives of the Alabama Chapter.
- Involve Student Chapters with program development and delivery

STRATEGIES:

- A. Supporting College/University Student Chapters
 - B. Supporting the Envirothon Program with workers, etc.
 - C. Organize tours to observe environmental and conservation problems along with solutions.
 - D. Offer Poster presentation opportunities at our annual meeting.
 - E. Organize student participation in soil and water related competitions at the Annual Alabama Chapter meeting SWCS.
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OBJECTIVE 6.:

Foster natural resources education for the members, land users, schools, county and local government leaders that influence use and management of public property and the general public.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Provide list of available education material to educators
- Identify and partner with Soil and Water Conservation Districts, ADEM and others to identify current education material and fill any gaps identified with available resources.
- Actively involve student chapters in education efforts.

STRATEGIES:

- A. Investigate the potential for the Chapter to impact resources conservation youth education in Alabama
 - B. Identify and evaluate existing natural resources conservation youth education materials
 - C. Develop a display to enhance public awareness
 - D. Develop appropriate educational resource lists identifying programs, materials recommended for use in youth conservation education with others.
 - E. Maximize use of national SWCS material by identifying available materials and structuring to Alabama.
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OBJECTIVE 7.:

Share environmental knowledge with appropriate legislative and rule-making bodies. Act to promote sound laws and regulations within the guidelines of a non-profit organization. We will be an advocate for legislation and public policy that promotes the conservation of natural resources through our own action and supporting the actions of others.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Increase Chapter Visibility
- Advocate Chapter's positions
- Involve Chapter members in public policy development
- Partner with agricultural, natural resources and environmental organizations.
- Support others positions
- Link members with legislators
- Improve Chapter communications

STRATEGIES:

- A. Develop a written process for policy development and development of resolutions.
- B. Develop a process to gain member input into policy and position statement development.
- C. Develop a strategy to increase our visibility relative to policy issues.
- D. Identify and select the specific issues appropriate for Chapter involvement, i.e. The Alabama Erosion Control Task Force.
- E. Research the identified issues and determine the level of involvement. E.g. developing position statements.

- F. Support legislation that leads to enhancement of natural resources of Alabama.
 - G. Establish working relationships with legislators and congressional representatives
 - H. Respond to legislation affecting Alabama Conservation efforts and other resource groups affected by government reorganization and fiscal constraints.
 - I. Educate our members in a timely fashion.
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OBJECTIVE 8.:

Secure adequate funding to ensure the success of the Chapter's objectives, to provide a sound infrastructure for the chapter, and to support chapter functions.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Use educational programs as financial drivers. (will allow us to do advocacy, etc.)
- Create residuals through fees for member services (i.e. handbooks, publications, meetings, etc.)
- Research sponsorships for meeting breaks, speakers, promotional items, etc
- Evaluate dues structure

STRATEGIES:

- A. Evaluate the funding potential of marketing conservation-related services, materials, and products. (e.g. certification training, handbooks, seminars, and erosion control specialty items.)
- B. Seek grants and sponsorships for funding specific projects and activities, i.e. education materials, certification training, printing, etc.
- C. Develop a resource list identifying potential funding sources for Chapter programs, projects, and activities
- D. Evaluate the current meeting registration fee and Chapter dues structure.
- E. Sponsor at least one fundraiser per year.
- F. Set goals for funds, (i.e. development of a sediment erosion handbook and provide for funding.)
- G. Investigate the potential for development of 501 (c) 3 and/or a foundation to establish college scholarships or sponsor teachers in conservation workshops.

OBJECTIVE 9.:

Increase membership growth and involvement through programs and services that meet or exceed member needs.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Survey members to determine needs
- Establish recruiters in agencies and campuses
- Promote chapter value to members and non-members
- Recognize members and others for service to chapter and state for accomplishments in conservation, education and legislation.
- Involve new members on committees
- Investigate segments where we are underrepresented and take actions needed to correct.

STRATEGIES:

- A. Research the professional development needs of under-represented groups, i.e. District employees, self employed, etc.
- B. Offer poster presentation opportunities for students and academics
- C. Increase visibility within all relevant state and federal agencies
- D. Investigate the need to conduct another internal survey (similar to the survey of 1996)
- E. Investigate the need to expand the awards to outstanding leadership in agencies, legislature, etc. to promote and expand visibility of the chapter
- F. Research the specific needs of retired members
- G. Explore new methods to involve Chapter members in soliciting and submitting nominations for national awards.
- H. Develop a reward system for members for length of membership, recruiting new members.
- I. Develop system of identifying long time membership (e.g. membership pins with 3, 5, 10, 15, 20, CPESC, etc) with membership pins.
- J. Publish a directory of members.

Alabama Chapter Soil and Water Conservation Society

The following are items we looked at when we considered the development of a strategic plan for the Alabama Chapter. Some are far out and others are very achievable.

STRENGTHS

Professional Development
Educational programs
Camaraderie
Networking
Alliances and partnering
CPESC programs
Associate with noble cause
Potential for diversity among professions
Member resources pool
History of Society
Achievements to date
NRCS Management support
CPECS/CCA professional associations

WEAKNESSES

Total member participation
Developing position statements
Policy development
Communication (press releases, etc.)
Fund-raising / Funding
Marketing
Not enough diversity (professions)
Cost of membership/programs
We need clear benefit statement
Education programs, participate in envirothons, projects, etc.
Other activities beyond CPESC, CCA
Community Service
Working with State Legislature
Expanding CEU's to include Teachers, Professional Engineers

OUTSIDE FORCES AFFECTING OUR ORGANIZATION

Less dollars
Less time
Public support for environmental programs
Member Stress
Competition for members time from other
Organizations, i.e. scouts, sports, church, etc.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

Certification
Self-employed
New NRCS organization
District employees and Supervisors
Alliances and partners
Corporations
Recruiting bonus/incentives for members
Activate area programs and increase visibility
Retired professionals
Associate members
Direct appropriations for funding chapter events
Student Chapter
Junior Chapter in High Schools
Watershed assessments
Exploit our status as a "middle of the road" environmental organization

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

Develop a mentoring program
BRProvide member recognition i.e. special pin, welcome letter, etc
Host a wetland symposium
File for 501(c) 3 status and hire a director
Develop a scholarship program
Publish a directory
Establish working relationships with legislators
Develop working relationships with others, IECA, LICA, etc. Consider joint meeting with others
without threats
Identify-contact potential partners
Skills inventory of members
Letter of welcome to new members

Congratulations letter to members for their achievements
Work with legislators. Our chapter should provide position statements
Publish directory of members
Establish a permanent address for the Society (separate from NRCS)
Help establish a two-year curriculum in Engr Tech for Water Technology
Expand awards-Establish Legislator of year, educator of Year in K-6, 7-12 etc.
Establish a List Server
Have a keynote speaker at annual meetings
Establish services to student members, mentoring, job fair at annual meeting.
Application of knowledge through plan review,
Phase 2 training NPDES, etc.
Partner for soil health
File for 501(c) 3
Hire an executive director for the chapter
Form a SWCS foundation
Establish a scholarship
Sponsor technology transfer, Wetland symposium, Roundtables
Partner with IECA
Develop a speaker bureau
Develop a membership handbook
Develop a leader handbook

OUR ORGANIZATION SERVES

Members
General public
Governmental Agencies
Community and state leaders
Natural resource base
Potential members
Politicians, CPESC, CCA

WHO WE WOULD LIKE TO BE

Frequently contacted by Legislators
A contact for natural resource conservation information.
A developer of quality courses for meaningful conservation educational programs
A partnership conservation education builder
An alliance for SWCD's/AACD, IECA others.
Someone contacted for sample ordinances, and unbiased technical information
A partner in conservation education programs.

