

GOAL 3: Watershed Stewardship

Protect and manage Marin Water lands for the long-term benefits for the community and the environment.

The District's 19,800 acres of watershed lands serve as the bedrock foundation for the District's operations providing essential ecological services that directly influence water quality and availability and support the region's rich biodiversity. This Watershed Stewardship Goal encapsulates our dedication to multifaceted initiatives that span environmental stewardship, wildfire resiliency, watershed restoration, the enhancement of watershed facilities, and the support for education and recreation, which connects the community to their watershed lands. Stewardship of these lands safeguards our precious water resources and cultivates a resilient and thriving ecosystem that benefits our community and future generations. This goal reflects our commitment to maintaining high-quality drinking water while preserving the biodiversity of the region and fostering a deep connection between the community and watershed lands.

Five-Year Objectives

Objective 1 - Creek Restoration

The District will strive to protect and restore watershed lands to improve upland habitat and streams to help establish a resilient landscape that can help buffer against climate-induced risks. Through active restoration and monitoring the District will help the community steward the unique biological resources of the Mt. Tamalpais Watershed and Lagunitas Creek.

- Advance the implementation of the Lagunitas Creek Watershed Enhancement Plan in collaboration with State Parks, funding partners, and resource agencies to enhance critical habitat and geomorphic processes that are needed to sustain threatened and endangered species.
- Lead fisheries lifecycle monitoring and habitat enhancement effectiveness monitoring, in alignment with the Lagunitas Stewardship Plan; coordinate with the Lagunitas Technical Advisory Committee and regional monitoring efforts to update the Lagunitas Creek Stewardship Plan.
- Integrate new monitoring technology by expanding a network of Passive Integrated Transponders Antennas to improve fisheries monitoring data.
- Support with technical expertise regional restoration planning efforts for Walker Creek and other watersheds within District boundaries; participate in technical conferences and regional working groups to share out restoration methods and fisheries monitoring data.

Objective 2 - Wildfire Resiliency

The District will continue implementing multi-benefit restoration treatments to maintain a resilient watershed by scaling up the Biodiversity Fire, and Fuels Integrated Plan (BFFIP) and One Tam Forest Health Strategy. Through proactive management and collaboration with regional partners, the District will advance landscape-scale stewardship efforts on watershed lands that will help safeguard our communities, ecosystems, and water resources for a resilient and sustainable future.

- Maintain effective partnerships between watershed rangers and local, regional, and state emergency response agencies to enhance interagency collaboration to support emergency response and mitigation strategies.
- Sustain organizational capacity to increase the pace and scale of the BFFIP to enhance forest resiliency, protect water infrastructure, manage invasive plants, and achieve wildfire risk reduction.
- Advance strategic partnerships to secure funding for stewardship activities outlined in the BFFIP and as part of other long-term watershed restoration efforts.
- Support workforce development through advancing the Ranger Trainee Program and in partnership with California Conservation Corps, California Conservation Corps North Bay, AmeriCorps Programs, and other regional natural resources and wildfire training efforts.
- Replace aging wildland firefighting and vegetation management equipment to ensure the District has the operational capabilities for emergency response and watershed forest restoration and fuel reduction.

Objective 3 - Stewardship

The District will foster participation and collaboration with the community, creating a strong connection between the public and the Mt Tamalpais Watershed. The District will advance stewardship and climate adaptation strategies through technical studies and regional partnerships. By participating in the District's volunteer program, community members can contribute towards preserving our water supply, protecting biodiversity, and caring for our shared natural resources.

- Sustain annual biological monitoring to inform our scientific knowledge of the watershed and to support environmental compliance for District operations and long-term planning.
- Engage and contribute technical expertise as part of regional stewardship efforts through One Tam, TOGETHER Bay Area, and the Golden Gate Biosphere Network.
- Lead habitat restoration, trail maintenance, environmental education, and community science projects and programs that provide opportunities for the community to engage in stewardship, improve the health of the watershed, and make a positive impact on our environment.

Objective 4 - Recreation

The District will maintain a welcoming and enriching environment to support visitors engaging in nature based recreational activities.

- Advance priority outcomes of the Watershed Recreation Management Planning Feasibility study to better support visitors and protect the watersheds biodiversity as an ongoing adaptive management strategy.
- Complete the Azalea Hill Trail Restoration Project through enhancement of trail facilities and removal of social trails to restore sensitive habitats.
- Advance improvements along the Cataract Trail to replace aging trail infrastructure and establish a more sustainable trail network and trail head.
- Create nature-based self-guided tours and outreach materials to help educate the community about the watershed's biodiversity, water resources, wildfire issues, and climate change.

- Evaluate priority Roads and Trails to inform adaptive management to guide improvements to recreational facilities, including hiking trails, fire roads, picnic areas, parking lots and restrooms.

Objective 5 - Facilities

The District will ensure that watershed facilities are operational and well-kept, thereby supporting four critical aspects: emergency response readiness, water system operations, visitor access for recreational and educational purposes, and ongoing environmental restoration efforts within the watershed.

- Carry out multi-benefit watershed maintenance projects that preserve the function of watershed facilities while improving the watersheds ecological services.
- Integrate watershed facilities into the Facilities Master Plan to guide key updates to watershed facilities, improve Sky Oaks Headquarters, and evaluate opportunities for environmental education facilities.
- Enhance Ranger residences while evaluating opportunities for watershed seasonal employee housing to help remove barriers for early career professionals looking to work in the natural resources field in Marin County.
- Advance priority elements of the West Peak Restoration Project Conceptual Plan to remove degraded infrastructure to improve wildlife corridor and habitat while advancing visitor access improvements.
- Apply modern best practices to updating the Roads and Trails Management Plan to support ongoing maintenance of watershed facilities to protect water quality, support a sustainable road and trails network, preserve biodiversity, and provide the community with facilities that support nature-based experiences on the watershed.