

**AREA PLAN**

**FOR**

**COCOPAI RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND  
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

**Flagstaff, Arizona**

**2009-2013**

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## **Introduction**

This document is the long-range plan for Cocopai Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council Inc. It was developed by soliciting public input through a survey of City, Town and County elected officials and staff in Coconino and Yavapai counties, the service area of the Cocopai RC&D. In addition to the survey results, meetings of the Natural Resource Conservation Districts (NRCDS) were attended and input requested from the governing boards of Directors. Local Council members were provided guidance on the development of this plan. Input from the representatives regularly attending Council meetings provided input as well.

The purpose of this plan is to provide a strategic direction for the organization. The organization is stronger than ever before, yet more efforts are needed to ensure a strong sustainable organization that serves the communities in our area.

Congress passed the Food and Agricultural Act of 1962, which authorized Resource Conservation and Development areas. The purpose of the act was to expand opportunities for conservation districts, local units of governments, and individuals to improve their communities in multi-county areas. This included assistance in enhancing the economic, environmental and social well being of the RC&D Areas. Currently, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service administers the Federal RC&D Program. This document serves as an agreement between NRCS and the Cocopai Resource Conservation and Development Area Council Inc.

# **Organization Overview**

## **A. Mission**

The mission of the Cocopai Resource Conservation and Development Council is:  
Provide local leadership to address natural resource conservation issues through cooperative efforts.

## **B. Vision**

Create partnerships to meet the challenges of economic and natural resource development that is environmentally sensitive.

## **C. Background**

The Cocopai RC&D was established in March 1973 to carry out an area plan that would address needs identified in an annual plan of work.

The Name “COCOPAI” comes from a combination of Coconino and Yavapai Counties. Cocopai RC&D Area is located in north central Arizona. It includes the counties of Coconino and Yavapai and also serves part of Mohave County north of the Colorado River through an informal arrangement with the Lower Colorado River RC&D, an area encompassing approximately 17 million acres.

There are 13 incorporated cities and towns in the area, 6 natural resource conservation districts, all or part of five American Indian reservations, and a number of local organizations that take on active interest in resource conservation and community development. Many of these sponsors are RC&D sponsors and supporters.

## **D. Overview**

**Coconino County** is the second largest county in the United States and contains some of the most spectacular beauty in the world. The Grand Canyon and Oak Creek Canyon are located here as well as Glen Canyon Dam and part of Lake Powell near the City of Page. Grand Canyon National Park, Sunset Crater, and Walnut Canyon National Monument operated by the U.S. National Park Service, attract a large number of visitors from around the world.

**Yavapai County** is home to Prescott, once the Territorial Capital and a prosperous mining and timber community during Arizona's early settlement period. Now Prescott and the Verde Valley are popular tourist, retirement and resident areas due to the moderate climate and natural beauty of the area.

**Climate** of north central Arizona is one of it's' most popular attributes. During the summer the high elevations produce cool days with temperatures in the mid eighties. The cool days are a major attraction for many people from the Phoenix and Tucson areas. In the winter there is an average of one hundred inches of snowfall in Flagstaff and is a major draw for winter recreation. Skiing, both down hill and cross-country are the main winter sports. There are two rainfall seasons. The first occurs during winter from November to March, when the area is subjected to Pacific-generated storms. These rains are normally gentle. Major shifts of the jet stream have caused intense, long-duration storms with resultant flooding. The rainy season occurs in July, August, and part of September. Moist air moves into the state from the south and causes widespread thunderstorm activity. This is often referred to as the "monsoon season." A monsoon day is defined as a day with an average dew point of 55 degrees f or higher. The intensity of these summer storms varies greatly, as does their location. Generally, the heaviest amounts of precipitation over short periods of time are responsible for many local flooding problems.

**Soils** occur on the landscape in an orderly pattern that is related to the geology, landform, and vegetation. Each kind of soil is associated with a particular kind or segment of the landscape. Great differences in soil properties can occur within short distances. The typical

groupings represent shallow soils in the mountains, rocky soils at the base of mountains, soil with less rock and large amounts of lime, and soils in drainages that are subject to flooding. Soil surveys have been completed in many parts of the RC&D area. These soil surveys provide detailed soil information on over 10 million acres of land in north- central Arizona. These reports are available through the local USDA - Natural Resource Conservation Service field offices.

**Business & Industry** are dominated by government, recreation and cattle grazing. Federal, state, county and local government account for the biggest employers with the Northern Arizona University located in Flagstaff. Prescott is the main urban center in Yavapai County. Recreation and tourism are important economic contributors in the area.

**E. Demographics**

According to the 2006 census estimate, the population of the Cocopai RC&D area is 332,967.

Yavapai County population	208,014	Percent
White	198,237	95.3
Hispanic	25,170	12.1
American Indian	3,328	1.6
Black	1,664	.8
Other	1,664	.8

Coconino Co. population	124,953	Percent
White	83,347	66.7
Hispanic	15,119	12.1
American Indian	35,986	28.8
Black	1,624	1.3
Other	1,624	1.3

## **F. Natural Resources**

The Cocopai RC&D area is heavily forested. The largest Ponderosa Pine forest starts south of Prescott and continues north beyond the northern border of Arizona. The forests are heavily overgrown and pose significant danger of stand replacing fires destroying stands as well as communities.

## **G. Agriculture**

Irrigated cropland has diminished in the area as it has in much of Arizona as urban areas expand and replace farming and ranching. Irrigated cropland is less than 500 acres. There are some efforts to increase profits from value added marketing by retailing locally grown beef.

## **H. Economic**

For an overview of the economy of the two counties of the Cocopai RC&D area, please refer to the Appendix A for the Arizona Department of Commerce County Profile Data.

## **Needs and Opportunities**

### **A. Public Participation Activities**

The public participation focused on three main efforts to gain input. The first was with long time partners in the Natural Resource Conservation Districts group. The second was with City, Town and County Boards that represent the Sponsors of the RC&D Council. The third was with Sponsors representatives, agency partners and others that participate with the Council in projects.

The groups were surveyed by mail or queried during public meetings.

### **B. Summary of Finding by RC&D Program Elements**

#### **i. Land Conservation**

Land conservation received some responses with weed management, forestry issues, and watershed planning receiving some attention. Native seed production was another issue that received some support.

#### **ii. Water Management**

Water quantity was identified as an important issue in the area. There are about 23 watershed groups in the region.

#### **iii. Community Development**

Economic development received a large response on local needs. Providing information on alternative forms of energy was another area of interest. Continuing to provide information and training on issues such as leadership, technical skills and collaboration were stressed as needed.

#### **iv. Land Management**

Trying to save unique farmland has not been successful in the past. Exploring the formation of a Land Trust is something to consider.

**Goals Objectives and Strategies – Land Conservation**

**A. Facilitate opportunity to develop sustained watershed improvement in the Verde Valley. Create 5 area wide plans to improve water quality and reduce sedimentation from 2009 – 2013.**

**Linked to NRCS Goal for Clean and Abundant Water Supply**

1. Recruit 300 volunteers to work on watershed projects in the Valley by 2013.
  - 1a. Develop plans for 10 watershed projects each year.

Responsibility	Activity	Timeline	Budget	Status
Miller	Grant	Nov		
Joens	Partnerships	December		
Tyler	Planning	January		
Tyler	Implementation	January	\$5,000	

**B. Facilitate opportunities to develop alternative agriculture for the City of Flagstaff Red Gap Water ranch while protecting or improving range resources by fiscal year 2010.**

**Linked to NRCS Goal for Healthy Plant and Animal Communities**

1. Create local interest and form a group to advise how best to use the water ranch by educating the public through a combination of 4 articles and public meetings about the Flagstaff Red Gap Water Ranch.

Responsibility	Activity	Timeline	Budget	Status
Davison	Partnerships	October '10	\$400	
Davison	Planning	January '11		
Staff	Articles	March '11		

**C. Develop a weed district in the Verde Valley that mirrors the new State Invasive Weed Plan in Fiscal Year (FY) 09**

**Linked to NRCS Goal for Healthy Plant and Animal Communities**

1. Create a weed panel comprised of interested parties to educate, identify and prioritize ways to reduce invasive species by FY 10.

1c. Organize 10 weed reduction events by 2013.

Responsibility	Activity	Timeline	Budget	Status
Allen	Partnerships	February '09	\$1800	
Panel	Education	2009		
Allen	Projects	'09-'13		

**D. Facilitate 5 “Ranch Workshops” for individuals in the RC&D area.**

**Linked to NRCS Goal for Working Farm and Ranch Lands**

1. Utilize the Arizona Grazing Lands Initiative and local input to determine what areas of ranch ownership to emphasize within the workshops by December of 2010.

1d. Organize and hold five ranch workshops by 2013.

Responsibility	Activity	Timeline	Budget	Status
Towler	Outreach	'09 - 2013	\$250	
Partner	Workshop	'09 -2013		

**Goals, Objectives and Strategies – Community Development**

No goals in NRCS Strategic plan for community development

**A. Facilitate opportunities to reduce our dependence on foreign oil and explore alternative forms of energy by 2013**

1. Gather a regional coalition of experts, by 2010, to identify and promote alternative energy. Educate council members and partners by hosting one speaker a year at full Council meetings.

Responsibility	Activity	Timeline	Budget	Status
Council member	Partnerships	2009	\$400	
Member	Speaker	2010		

**B. Assist one Community improve recreational/tourism facilities by 2013.**

No link to NRCS Strategic Plan

1. Provide fundraising and planning assistance to Verde Valley to develop a comprehensive trails plan by 2011.

Responsibility	Activity	Timeline	Budget	Status
De Witt	Facilitator	2009	\$600	
Rothrock	Planning	2009 – 2011		

- 1a. Assist with grant search for Chino Valley Food Bank by 2010.

Responsibility	Activity	Timeline	Budget	Status
Schmidt	Facilitator	2009	\$250	
Fransden	Grant	'09 – '10		
Puppo	Partnership	2009		

**C. Assist Chino Valley expand the Farmers Market thru the Farmers Market Promotion Program by providing administrative assistance with planning and funding in order to complete a marketing plan by May of 2010**

Responsibility	Activity	Timeline	Budget	Status
Schmidt	Partnerships	May 2010	\$300	

**Goals, Objectives and Strategies – Land Management**

Did not receive comments about the need for land management

**Goals, Objectives and Strategies – Water Conservation**

**Linked to NRCS goals clean & abundant water**

**A. Assist communities with water conservation by reducing water use in 5 municipalities by 2013.**

- 1. Conduct irrigation workshops for 5 interested communities.

Responsibility	Activity	Timeline	Budget	Status
Council	Awareness	2010	\$500	
Council	Partnership	2010		
Partner	Workshop	'10 – '13		

**Current and Potential Partnerships with USDA and Others**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), US Forest Service, Rural Development, Agriculture Marketing Service(AMS), and Food & Nutrition Service are the current and potential USDA Agency partners for the Council.

Arizona State Land Department, AZ Game & Fish, AZ Department of Commerce, AZ Department of Agriculture and the Natural Resources Conservation Districts are past partners or potential state partners.

Grand Canyon Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club, Audubon Society, and 23 Watershed Associations in the Verde Valley are potential partners.

## Signatures

"The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Cocopai RC&D prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

The *Cocopai* RC&D Council agrees that the signing of this document constitutes agreement to comply with Federal laws concerning restrictions on lobbying, a drug-free workplace, and responsibilities for non-procurement, suspension, and debarment, and State review.

The Cocopai RC&D Council hereby adopts this RC&D Area Plan and agrees to use effectively the assistance provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to realize the goals and objectives outlined herein.

### **Cocopai RC&D Council, Arizona**

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Council Secretary

This action authorized at an official meeting of the Cocopai RC&D Council on September 15th, 2009.

### **US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service**

The State Conservationist hereby acknowledges the attached Area Plan of Cocopai RC&D Council as meeting the requirements under PL 97-98 to receive assistance from USDA.

\_\_\_\_\_  
DAVID L. MCKAY  
State Conservationist  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_