

**Strategic Planning Workshop 4/13/2022**  
**4:00pm-7:00pm**

**Participants:**

**Strategic Planning Team Members (SPT)**

Chris Aldassy  
Whitney Bailey  
Julie DiLeone  
Katie Meckes  
Rowan Steele  
Chelsea White-Brainard

**Strategic Planning Team Support**

Nancy Hamilton  
Asianna Fernandez  
Chris Wallace Caldwell, Catalysis LLC  
Jamila Dozier, New Theory Consulting LLC

**EMSWCD Managers**

Dan Mitten  
Kathy Shearin

**EMSWCD Board Members**

Mike Guebert  
Laura Masterson  
Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky  
Joe Rossi  
Jim Carlson

**Meeting Began: 4:04pm**

**1. Gathering and Goals/ Process for today**

**Caldwell** gave an overview of today's meeting. Reminded that we are not in decision-making mode for today's meeting, not in that part of the process yet. Addressed the differences between today's meeting and normal Board Meetings: suggested everyone have their camera on if possible and everyone (staff, management, and board) to engage in conversations.

Simple guideline for today's meeting: W.A.I.T.: Why Am I (still) Talking? And Why Aren't I Talking?

We are in Collaborating and Planning phase of strategic planning.

**2. EMSWCD Mission**

**Bailey, Aldassy, and Steele** gave a presentation about the developmental timeline of the draft Mission Statement that the Strategic Planning Team created.

Final draft statement agreed on by the Strategic Planning Team: "Caring for land and water for a more resilient and livable future for all."

**Dozier** What is the same and what is different? Based on strategic goals, this may also be changed.

**SPT** Curious to learn what the board thought of the presentation and reminder that this is not the final draft.

**Guebert** Appreciated the hard work put into it. Likes that it's concise, memorable, nicely summarizes the work the District does. Likes "for all," would prefer not to use "current and future generations."

**Zimmer-Stucky** In amending the mission, what do folks think they can accomplish with the new mission statement that they couldn't with the previous mission statement?

**White-Brainard** Adding a more resilient and livable future spoke to climate resilience and "for all" spoke to equity while also not separating humans from nature. The new statement shows what we do and why.

**Hamilton** It's important to say explicitly that we are working on climate resiliency, instead of it being implied.

**Bailey** This statement shifts the focus from helping people who directly interact or steward the land to give a reason to being the stewards; and speaks to those who don't have any direct relationship to agriculture or land.

**Aldassy** Bringing our services to 'all' is something we're all passionate about and adding that aspect to the mission statement felt good.

**Steele** The difference between supporting those who care for land and water to also add the work that the District is directly driving or leading.

**Rossi** Likes the new statement, sounds more inclusive. Agreed with Rowan in the land-interest perspective, we add value to people who are doing projects as well as doing projects ourselves. Question on if the statement could reflect that partnership with others.

**Zimmer-Stucky** Not opposed to this new statement but feels like changing a mission statement is something that happens infrequently. Wants to make sure that we're being thoughtful that this is the right time to make a change again after having one in the past 10 years. Wants to make sure this statement won't be changed again in the next few years. Will changing the mission statement actually change the direction of the work?

**Caldwell** Mission statements guide our work but also helps explain to outsiders how we work.

**Shearin** With "we help people," one partner said it felt patronizing. The new statement is a reminder that we don't do it ourselves and we don't only support others.

**Masterson** Feels like we're catching up to some of the things the District is already doing or has been shifting. Feels like there's an overuse of the word "for".

**Bailey** Noted the previous mission statement revision was in 2012. The "for" usage has been considered.

**Hamilton** We haven't found a better idea for the multiple "for", we're open to suggestions.

**Action Item:** SPT to look back at "for" and Rossi's concern in including how we are working with others. SPT to consider input and present options back to this group.

### 3. Common Language in Planning (4:54pm)

**Caldwell** Introduced Banelos and Quince. When in Strategic planning, there are a lot of weighted words that get used. If they're not defined in the beginning, they can be hard to use as a team. Important to gain shared understanding of words and concepts.

#### Conservation and Equity (4:58pm)

**Quince** provided a land acknowledgment.

**Banelos** What does racism have to do with soil and water conservation? Shared a story from an Indigenous man who works in conservation: He noted that while our region has been called "The Wild West," this land was not wild; it was intentionally and well taken care of by the indigenous people.

**Quince** led a breathing exercise after hearing Banelos's story.

**Banelos**

- It will take intentional equity work to repair what has been taken and how people of color have been excluded. You can't take care of the land if you're not taking care of the people.
- We need diverse thinking and approach styles, and to learn, appreciate, and integrate past practices without extracting.
- We must seek out BIPOC folks because if we keep doing the same thing, we will have the same land and community degradation results.
- Many organizations are feeling this new pressure to lead change in climate issues and social injustices.

**Quince** Asked the participants to pretend you could wave a wand and could do anything in relation to equity and conservation:

Where would your magic wand give you influence over equity and inclusion?

**Aldassy** Would wave a magic wand over people's hearts to give them a greater sense of empathy, especially decision makers.

**Meckes** To go back in time and be someone who could interrupt and undo systemic racism.

**Zimmer-Stucky** Give people a chance to love where they live and give them an opportunity to live somewhere that meets all their needs. Give people the access that historic practices have created barriers for. People who want to run for a board seat should be able to regardless of land ownership.

**Guebert** Give anyone who wanted to farm, the ability to farm, removing all barriers.

**Carlson** We need to take everything into consideration, especially how we can help people in general without preconceived notions of where we want to go.

**Hamilton** Agrees with Zimmer-Stucky in whoever would like to run for a board seat should be able to. A mind-meld with all BIPOC in our constituency to hear their wants and needs, hire more people of color to our team.

**Caldwell** Reconnecting to an area that you may not come from to see a connection and live with that awareness of connection as if this land matters to us and future generations.

**Bailey** Re-elevate the importance of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) as a way of knowing, as an invitation to western scientific thinking for collaboration. And restore/establish the sense of indigenous heart-connection to the land and to each other; shifting to a mindset of obligation/stewardship for the future and others, rather than entitlement/rights for ourselves in the here & now. As a staff member, I would model and support such thinking/actions.

**Quince** What action would you take toward inclusion from your powerful position as a member of the Board or a staff member at EMSWCD?

**Zimmer-Stucky** Listening to people, asking questions, implementing solutions. Revisiting land management requirement for sitting on the board.

**Guebert** Thinking beyond ourselves to ensure all people can grow their own food if they choose to.

**Hamilton** Cool down all the water for salmon and add trees to urban cities that are heat islands.

The group took one final moment to share how the discussion has left them feeling using the compass that Banuelos and Quince shared.

**Banuelos** What are you taking away with you from the discussions?

**Quince** This group can really do powerful things when you come together.

**Zimmer-Stucky** Feeling is for thinking and thinking is for acting.

**Bailey** Reminder of how important this work is and how fortunate we are to be a part of it.

**White-Brainard** Just because it's hard and daunting doesn't mean it's unimportant and doesn't need to be done.

**Banuelos** This work does let us step into other people's experiences, and this work helps us understand where we need to do our work.

**Jamila (5:47pm)** asked everyone to take a couple minutes to jot down answers to: What does equity mean to you? What does equity mean to the District?

**Shearin** Both mean everyone reaps the benefits of conservation work, everyone is held accountable for what they do and don't do, everyone's voices are heard and have a seat at the table.

**White-Brainard** Acknowledging that we're not all starting from the same place, taking into account societal and institutional inequities so that we start to course correct.

**Guebert** Making sure that we differentiate between equity and equality. Doing more than simply putting programs out, trying to work harder to put programs and resources out for those who historically have not had ease of access. Remembering that some people need extra access for some things.

**Zimmer-Stucky** Going back to mission statement, livable and resilient future for all means some people will need more resources than others. Listening to what individuals need before creating work to fit those needs.

**Aldassy** Keeping in mind that my experience of life through privilege is not the same as everyone else's.

**Meckes** For the District, changing how we work and focusing on people who have historically been marginalized, ask what they need and act accordingly.

**Jamila** shared a presentation describing the difference between equality, equity, and liberation.

### **Climate Change Language (6:15pm)**

**Caldwell** The previous presentation from Dozier can help us think about how we are applying equity in the District.

**Caldwell** shared a presentation about climate language.

Are there any examples of work done in the District that would be an example of climate adaptation?

**SPT** StreamCare, Urban Lands education and workshops on proper vegetation placement, gardening and habitat protection.

**Caldwell** Are there any examples of work done in the District that would be an example of climate mitigation?

**Steele** StreamCare as well, promoting cover crops for carbon sequestration, solar and electric equipment at Headwaters.

**Caldwell** Are there any examples of work done in the District that would be an example of climate resiliency?

**Guebert** increasing organic matter in agriculture soils that will hold more water to combat dry seasons and heatwaves.

**SPT** StreamCare, MHCC Depave project, increasing and encouraging biodiversity.

**Hamilton** Everything we do as a SWCD is going to either help improve things or make them worse. Everything we do is directly related to everything climate related.

**White-Brainard** Climate Justice biggest contributors to climate issues are the ones with the most money and dig the opposers hole deeper.

**Rossi** Agrees with Nancy, everything we do directly relates to climate change, but if that's true how hard do we need to work towards combatting climate change if the work we do already does that?

**Zimmer-Stucky** If StreamCare were to address only one climate section, which would that look like? Is interest in knowing how the strategic planning team uses the climate resiliency term that was just discussed to work in the proposed mission statement. The way we prepare for a climate disruption looks different from how we respond to one and recover from one.

**Aldassy** With the word resilient, there's other connotations that go along there, including vibrant and thriving. If something is thriving, it would be better to withstand against impact. The word has more weight than what we read on the screen.

**Bailey** What can we do to better mitigate what is going on as well as respond and become resilient before it happens? We should look at the intersectionality between those two ideas.

**Zimmer-Stucky** Sees resiliency as withstanding conflict, not thriving, maybe we do have a disconnect in language there.

**Caldwell** With resiliency, what are we hoping for, survival or thriving?

#### **4. Future Vision Preliminary Prioritization (6:42pm)**

Caldwell shared the document that the Board co-created and SPT, Management Team, Staff have added to about what they want to see change within the organization. Suggested doing an ideation process to see what is more important to the District. Also identify if anything else is missing from the list.

**Action Item:** Each person is given 8 "dots" (highlight) to choose where they find priority on the list using the preliminary questions as a guideline for decisions. This will help lead the SPT in their prioritization process as well.

**Due:** 4/22

**Action Item:** SPT to look at list one last time before it is sent to MTeam and Board of Directors.

#### **5. Next Steps (7:00pm)**

Finalize future Workshop dates:

May 18<sup>th</sup>, June 29<sup>th</sup>, July 20<sup>th</sup>, August 24<sup>th</sup>, September 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Action Item:** Caldwell and Dozier to send all slideshows and comments from today's meeting to the Board.

#### **6. Final Thoughts**

##### **ACTION ITEMS:**

- SPT to consider input on draft mission statement and present options back to this group.
- SPT to look at future vision brainstorm one last time before it is sent to MTeam and Board of Directors.
- Each person is given 8 "dots" (highlight) to choose where they find priority on the future vision brainstorm using the preliminary questions as a guideline for decisions. This will help lead the SPT in their prioritization process as well. **Due:** 4/22
- Caldwell and Dozier to send all presentations from today's meeting to the Board.
- SPT to look back at "for" and Rossi's concern in including how we are working with others. SPT to consider input and present options back to this group.

**Adjourned (7:03pm)**