



**CAWACO RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC.  
STRATEGIC PLAN 2019 – 2024**

**OUR VISION**

- Vibrant communities that achieve balance between economic, human and natural resource needs.

**OUR MISSION**

- To carry out plans of action for the accelerated conservation, development and proper use of the area’s resources resulting in an improved economic and physical environment.

**WHO WE SERVE**

- Communities in Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby and Walker counties

**OUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

- Administer grant programs to benefit area communities and nonprofits addressing unmet educational and community needs,
- Develop and/or manage federal, state or foundation grants and contracts that complement the mission of the Council.

**AREAS OF FOCUS 2019-2024**

- **VIBRANT COMMUNITIES**
  - Workforce development
  - Access to outdoor recreation
  - Community planning and design
  - Access to local food
  - First responder support
- **NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION**
  - Strategic habitat

*The purpose of this Plan is to provide a strategic direction for Cawaco RC&D, ensuring that resources are properly invested in area communities. This Plan assists Cawaco in remaining responsive to area communities and collaborative efforts. Since the needs of communities within the Service Area are dynamic, this Plan must be dynamic, and will evolve as needs emerge. While the goals, objectives and strategies contained in this Plan are fairly comprehensive, they will be reevaluated annually and implemented through an Annual Plan of Work.*



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## STRATEGIC PLAN 2019 – 2024

### Background and Context







Cawaco RC&D was established in 1979 and received 501(c)(3) nonprofit status in 1994. The RC&D program was developed based on the premise the local people, working together, can identify and solve problems and realize opportunities that enhance the quality of life. Cawaco plans and supports activities that increases conservation of natural resources, economic and human development and is actively involved in the management of multi-county, cross-jurisdictional projects.

The Board of Directors sets goals, objectives and standards of excellence. Through public input, Board direction and needs assessments, Cawaco RC&D works to identify unmet community needs and develop solutions to meet those needs.

### Cawaco's Organizational Competencies

- Identification of unmet needs: Through our network of partners, which includes legislators, county commissions, federal and state agencies, municipalities, foundations and other nonprofits, Cawaco is able to identify key projects that, if implemented, can make a profound difference in a community.
- Grant fund administration: Cawaco manages funds provided by the Alabama Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils. These funds are focused on educational and community development projects.
- Program delivery mechanism: Partners may identify a solution, but need assistance to administer or deliver a program. Cawaco is experienced with the administration and management of grants, contracts or coordination of personnel to deliver programs benefitting area communities.
- Address complex issues: Cawaco facilitates working groups to identify creative, workable and cost-effective solutions that address complex issues.

### Tools Used to Accomplish Mission

	<b>Alabama RC&amp;D Grant Funds:</b> Cawaco receives funds from the Alabama Association of Resource Conservation & Development Council to provide grants within the Council's area of focus.
	<b>Project Coordination:</b> Cawaco provides project coordination for groups such as the Alabama Rivers and Streams Network and Your Town Alabama.
	<b>Grant and Contract Management:</b> Cawaco actively pursues grant funds and contracts to address the Council's area of focus.
	<b>Tool Trailer:</b> Cawaco maintains a trailer of trail building tools to assist volunteers and area parks in building or maintaining trails.
	<b>Seed Distribution Program:</b> Cawaco distributes donated seeds and other resources to area schools and community gardens.
	<b>Staff and Board:</b> Cawaco's staff and board stand ready to assist with projects that make an impact in communities within the Council area.



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GOAL/STRATEGY		DESCRIPTION	TOOL(S)
<b>GOAL 1: Increase opportunities and resources to address 2019-2024 areas of focus</b>			
	Strategy A:	Develop or strengthen strategic partnerships with federal and state agencies, municipalities, corporations and other nonprofits to identify and develop resources to address areas of focus.	
	Strategy B:	Develop projects and partnerships that address unmet community needs within the Council's areas of focus.	
	Strategy C:	Actively pursue grant and contract opportunities that address unmet community needs within the Council's area of focus.	
<b>GOAL 2: Address 2019-2024 Area of Focus – Vibrant Communities</b>			
	Strategy A:	Focus grant funding provided by Alabama Association of RC&D to support projects that address areas of focus.	
	Strategy B:	Continue distribution of donated seeds and other resources to school and community gardens.	
	Strategy C:	Provide access to the tool trailer to enable building and maintenance of trails.	
	Strategy D:	Continue administrative support of Your Town Alabama.	
<b>GOAL 3: Address 2019-2024 Area of Focus – Natural Resources</b>			
	Strategy A:	Continue working with federal and state agencies to develop natural resource projects that address areas of focus.	
	Strategy B:	Continue administrative support for the Alabama River and Streams Network	
	Strategy C:	Provide support for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service <i>Partners for Fish &amp; Wildlife</i> program.	



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## DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAMS

### AARCDC GRANT PROGRAM

Cawaco receives funds from the Alabama Association of Resource Conservation & Development Councils to provide competitive grants to small towns and nonprofits who otherwise would not receive funding from other major funders or agencies. Grant funds per project range between \$2,000 and \$5,000. Projects funded include community development and educational.



### TOOL TRAILER

In 2011, Cawaco RC&D received a grant from ADECA to purchase and equip a trailer to assist groups in developing and maintaining recreational trails. Existing park staff and/or volunteers are allowed to borrow the trailer which is equipped with hand tools for trail building. Charles Yeager at the Turkey Creek Nature Preserves manages the use of the trailer and provides regular reports of its use.



### ALABAMA RIVERS & STREAMS NETWORK (ARSN)

ARSN is group of state and federal agencies, utilities, private companies, non-profit organizations that work together to identify opportunities for the restoration and recovery of imperiled aquatic species through science-based actions. The primary action of this group is to coordinate field work and studies. ARSN also provides scientific support for the Alabama Water Policy initiative.



### U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE – PARTNERS FOR FISH & WILDLIFE

The US F&WS will provide funding to Cawaco RC&D for the purpose of administering monetary assistance to landowners who perform remediation practices that improve habitat for threatened, endangered and at-risk species on private land.

### YOUR TOWN ALABAMA

Since 1998, the Your Town Alabama organization has conducted yearly community design and planning workshops for town officials and community leaders across Alabama. The workshop introduces citizens interested in improving their community to asset-based design in community planning. This method focuses on the inventory and utilization of the community's best assets (cultural, natural resources, historical). Cawaco RC&D was one of the founding members of Your Town Alabama.

