Hopland Research and Extension Center

STRATEGIC PLAN

2017 - 2037
Introduction

Strategy Framework

Strategic Planning Process
- REC system overarching goals
- Planning process
- Implementation of strategic plan and assessment of outcomes
- Committee members

Strategic Direction #1

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Strategic Direction #3

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INTRODUCTION

The Hopland Research and Extension Center (HREC) is one of the University of California’s (UC), Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources’ (ANR’s) nine Research and Extension Centers (RECs). The Centers are located throughout California’s various ecosystems and climatic zones representing nearly every major type of agricultural and natural resources system in the state. The RECs offer incredible natural resources, facilities, and staff to support and conduct high-quality experiments and deliver scientific results to local communities, as well as address regional, state, national, and international issues.

HREC is the UC ANR North Coast research center and is uniquely positioned to serve a diverse audience of stakeholders, including university researchers, agricultural producers, ranchers, natural resource managers, and members of the public interested in the unique ecosystems, flora, and fauna of the north coast. Located in the Mayacama Range primarily within Mendocino County’s Russian River watershed, its 5,358 acres of oak woodlands, grasslands, chaparral, streams, and wetland provide important opportunities for long-term applied research in critical habitats. HREC research has focused on a diversity of projects related to animal science and range management, entomology and public health, plant sciences, viticulture, and wildlife biology. Since acquiring the property in 1951, much of the UC research at HREC has focused on increasing agricultural production, primarily through improved range management options. HREC has always supported a flock of sheep, though the number of sheep on site and the number of acres grazed is significantly less than the thousands of sheep in the earlier decades. HREC now maintains 500 breeding ewes to support research and extension education efforts in animal science, sheep production, living- with- wildlife projects, and a sheep- shearing school. HREC is one of the last remaining research centers in the nation to support such sheep research projects. Additionally, since 1957, almost 500 acres have been fenced to exclude livestock grazing, which offers an excellent baseline reference sample for researchers. In the past, various range improvement research projects, mainly conversions of chaparral and oak woodland to grassland, were conducted to increase forage availability for livestock production. Through these projects two entire paired watersheds were cleared of all woody vegetation in order to maximize range potential while also increasing water yields to the Russian River through reduced evapotranspiration rates. Current research and management is focused on innovative approaches to restore these working landscapes as well as understand and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

UC ANR Vision Statement

ANR envisions a thriving California in 2025, where healthy people and communities, healthy food systems, and healthy environments are strengthened by closer partnerships between the University of California and its research and extension programs and the people of the state. The University remains connected and committed to the people of California, who enjoy a high quality of life, a healthy environment, and economic success in the global economy.

Hopland REC Mission Statement

HREC will maintain and enhance ecosystem integrity through applied research, adaptive management, and educational activities, while also supporting working landscapes, with diverse agricultural products and recognized ecosystem services derived from these landscapes.
In 2012 UC ANR launched a coordinated, future-oriented strategic planning effort for all nine RECs. The strategic planning charge is to develop a long-term and big-picture strategic plan centered on stakeholder input. The strategic plan is designed to serve as a “living document,” a flexible framework to set direction and focus effort over the next 20 years. The strategic planning effort is intended to be inclusive, future-oriented, and focused on implementation and assessment of plan deliverables through time. The REC system’s overall strategic planning effort is structured to include the following guiding goals:

- Develop an effective and organized approach for research and outreach at the centers and among the centers.
- Increase collaboration across the UC ANR network, including collaborations with surrounding University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) programs.
- Engage the local community in planning and implementation (local community is not necessarily place-based but also subject area-based).
- Engage partners not previously affiliated (e.g., non-ANR UC campuses, CSUs and other colleges, agencies, organizations).
- Align the REC strategic plan with the UC-ANR Strategic Vision 2020.
- Develop an effective communication and outreach program to increase visibility and the REC system’s pro-grammatic impact of the REC system.

The overall strategic planning effort is structured to plan deliverables through time. The REC system’s focused on implementation and assessment of outcomes in the future. The second meeting focused on refining the scope of the strategic directions through public event participants (survey) and HREC’s mission, history, and operations. The committee conducted a situational analysis that included obtaining input from other key stakeholders to identify current strengths of HREC, as well as outlining potential future opportunities and challenges that could influence how HREC operates in the future. The second meeting focused on understanding and exploring the stakeholder input and synthesizing this input into broad strategic directions.

Early on in the REC system’s strategic planning process, it was recognized that the strategic planning process must be intimately linked to a streamlined and executable implementation and assessment plan. Toward this end, the committee identified deliverables associated with each key action and the facilitators and the Director identified the persons/organizations with implementation authority. This broad matrix that links strategic directions, goals, and actions with implementation responsibility and deliverables will be used as the framework for identifying implementation priorities and assessing implementation progress through time. The HREC Director in conjunction with REC system administrators will develop annual priorities and assessing implementation progress through time. The HREC Director in conjunction with REC system administrators will develop annual priorities and assessing implementation progress through time. The HREC Director in conjunction with REC system administrators will develop annual priorities and assessing implementation progress through time.

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HREC provides research based information and demonstrations to support informed decision making and problem-solving. Stakeholders recognized the opportunity for HREC to promote more graduate student research, as well as create expanded and new research partnerships with landowners, agricultural producers, government agencies, and sustainable food and fiber networks, while broadening the REC’s research agenda. Critical regional issues that HREC is positioned to address include water quality and quantity, integrated pest management, soil health, carbon farming options, and economic stability through sustainable management and delivery of ecosystem services.

**Goals**

1. Enhance research capacity and integration
2. Increase research related to ecosystem integrity and diverse working landscapes
3. Increase access to and use of historic research and records

**Intended Outcomes**

- HREC’s scope of work includes projects that address both working landscapes and ecosystem integrity.
- Past and present research at HREC is more widely understood and utilized by industry and academics.
- Increased number and scope of diverse projects at HREC.
- Relevant and useful research from Hopland is being applied in policy and practice.
Goal 1: Enhance research capacity and integration

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<th>KEY ACTIONS</th>
<th>IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Conduct needs assessment</td>
<td>HREC Director in collaboration with local industry and HREC Research Advisory Committee (RAC)</td>
<td>• New research areas identified &lt;br&gt;• Needs assessment</td>
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<td>B. Explore new opportunities based on identified needs</td>
<td>HREC Director in collaboration with UC and non-UC academics, and RAC</td>
<td>• Additional new research projects</td>
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<td>C. Engage with new partners to conduct research and extension</td>
<td>HREC Director and HREC staff in collaboration with UC academics and local industry</td>
<td>• New methods to engage partners &lt;br&gt;• New relationships and collaborations &lt;br&gt;• Events to bring people together and to introduce industry to HREC resources available &lt;br&gt;• HREC led regional network to address shared interests in these areas &lt;br&gt;• Attendance at other organizations’ ongoing events</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Communicate research gaps in natural resource management, livestock grazing and integrated agricultural industries to university researchers</td>
<td>HREC Director, UC ANR colleagues, interested stakeholders, and HREC staff</td>
<td>• New research opportunities &lt;br&gt;• New relationships and collaborations &lt;br&gt;• Increased volume of research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Start a competitive grant process or sector-supported, sponsor-funded project, driven by external stakeholders</td>
<td>HREC Director in collaboration with UC-ANR Contracts and Grants, Senior Leadership, and Industry</td>
<td>• New grants offered through HREC &lt;br&gt;• New sponsored research &lt;br&gt;• Collaborative grants</td>
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Goal 2: Increase research related to ecosystem integrity and diverse working landscapes

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<tr>
<td>A. Ensure that the composition of the RAC supports the strategic areas of interest and strategic goals</td>
<td>HREC Director</td>
<td>• RAC composition that reflects HREC goals</td>
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<td>B. Align calls for proposals to include criteria for projects emphasizing ecosystem integrity, working landscapes and developing SOPs</td>
<td>HREC Director in collaboration with the RAC</td>
<td>• Ecosystem and working landscape related research proposals &lt;br&gt;• Standard Operating Procedures for various natural resource components, such as, vegetation, predators, and livestock, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Increase the diversity of distribution for the call for proposals</td>
<td>HREC Director in collaboration with the RAC and HREC Community Education Specialist</td>
<td>• Increased distribution</td>
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Goal 3: Increase access to and use of historic research and records

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<tr>
<td>A. Identify funding opportunities and prepare grant proposals to digitize and curate historical records</td>
<td>HREC Director and HREC staff in collaboration with UC-ANR Contracts and Grants</td>
<td>• Accessible, living database that can be easily updated and accessed on-line, including a searchable bibliography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Develop communication tools on website, Facebook, Twitter etc., on the availability of data</td>
<td>HREC Director in collaboration with UC-ANR Communication Services and HREC Community Education Specialist</td>
<td>• Enhancements to online and social media communication tools so that data are easily visible and accessible &lt;br&gt;• Increased awareness of tools by academic and industry communities</td>
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Enhance extension, visibility, and utilization

HREC is currently recognized as a regional hub in the North Coast for our efforts addressing ecosystem services in coordination with and input from the UC ANR California Naturalist program, and other programs and partners within and external to our UC network. Local UC Natural Reserves as well as our Sonoma State partners at Galbreath Wildlife Preserve in Mendocino County and Pepperwood Preserve in Sonoma County are linked to HREC through research and technology. The Mendocino County Resource Conservation District, the Fire Safe Council, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service have partnered with HREC on workshops for professionals and the public. Areas of opportunity identified by stakeholders include creating more connections with the University of California, and with local partners. Additionally, HREC has incredible on site resources to support this area of growth. The Rod Shippey Hall is a new, state-of-the art conference and lab facility for groups up to 200 or more. HREC has talented and dedicated staff including Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology support onsite. The lab renovation at the main office will provide support for increased research and education activities. The greenhouse, the 72-tank soil lysimeter, six barns, extensive herbarium collection, 20-bed bunkhouse with kitchen and laundry, high-speed internet connectivity and other resources add to our capacity to support the growth of extension at HREC. Finally, the commitment to a dedicated staff position onsite, the Community Education Specialist, will support outreach to the public on research results, recommendations and new technologies furthering our utilization and visibility.

Goals
1. Strengthen educational and outreach activities
2. Increase visibility of HREC
3. Develop HREC into a hub for agricultural and natural resources

Intended Outcomes
• Expanded program opportunities are supported by permanent outreach and education staff, volunteers, and partners.
• An increased number of diverse community partners are engaged in programs and activities at HREC.
• Students of all ages gain knowledge and skills through an expanded interactive education program.
• College students gain knowledge and skills through a new internship program.
• Professionals gain knowledge and skills through continuing education programming.
• HREC serves as a regional hub for agriculture and natural resource research and extension.
• REC partnership research opportunities support the needs of livestock managers to address ecosystem functions.
• Increased awareness of the resources and natural beauty at HREC.
• Increased use of HREC by new and diverse audiences.
STRATEGIC DIRECTION #2

Goal 1: Strengthen educational and outreach activities

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<tr>
<td>A. Conduct needs assessment</td>
<td>HREC Director and HREC staff in collaboration with internal and external stakeholders</td>
<td>Needs assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Explore new models for staffing</td>
<td>HREC Director in collaboration with REC Director</td>
<td>New models lead to permanent funding for outreach staff</td>
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<td>C. Improve connection to local K-12 schools and colleges (community, junior, and state colleges), non-profits and others working on shared goals</td>
<td>HREC Community Educator and other HREC staff</td>
<td>Enhanced activities connect with statewide core curriculum requirements, Connections between HREC and professors and classes, School groups attend day or multi-day field trips at HREC, Intern program</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Improve connection to programs, such as, California Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Master Food Preservers, 4-H Youth Development Program</td>
<td>HREC Director, HREC Community Educator and HREC staff</td>
<td>ANR program events and activities at HREC, Volunteer support</td>
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<tr>
<td>E. Expand and formalize volunteer support</td>
<td>HREC Community Educator and other staff</td>
<td>Volunteer directory, Increased volunteer hours, Organized volunteer group</td>
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<td>F. Create programs in continuing education for professional societies and the general public</td>
<td>UC academics and HREC staff in collaboration with non-UC academics and professional societies</td>
<td>Continuing education units offered through programs and events</td>
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<td>G. Engage partners to host existing educational programs</td>
<td>HREC Director and HREC staff</td>
<td>Directory of relevant state and national professional associations with which to coordinate CE unit programs, Programs at HREC hosted by partner organizations</td>
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Goal 2: Increase visibility of HREC

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<td>A. Create an outreach advisory committee devoted to outreach and long-term planning</td>
<td>HREC Director and HREC Community Education Specialist</td>
<td>New relationships and collaborations with complementary resources in region and state (e.g., natural reserves)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Develop a communications strategy</td>
<td>HREC Director in collaboration with UC ANR Communication Services and HREC Community Education Specialist</td>
<td>Branding plan that reflects mission statement of HREC, Increased online presence, Increased participation of underserved audiences, Marketing brochure that aligns with the mission (list of priority areas), Public awareness of the research that is occurring and has occurred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Develop regular events to recognize HREC activity (symposiums, field days, forums)</td>
<td>HREC Director, HREC staff and UC academics</td>
<td>Increased awareness by academics and stakeholders of HREC and resources, Hosted UC department meetings, Events that are accessible through improved technology, Activities that highlight and take advantage of natural beauty of HREC, Field trips and courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Develop agro-tourism and eco-tourism opportunities</td>
<td>HREC Director and HREC staff</td>
<td>Increased participation in on-site agro and eco activities, Outcomes documented from educational activities</td>
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Goal 3: Develop HREC into a Hub for agricultural and natural resources

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| A. Create connections for specific extension activities, for example vegetation types not represented at Hopland | HREC Director and HREC staff | • New relationships  
• New collaborations |
| B. Establish environmental education partnerships by collaborating with Project Learning Tree, Youth Family and Communities, 4-H, etc. bring in the rest of ANR programs | HREC staff | • New partnerships with regional and local environmental education groups |
| C. In partnership with Sierra Foothill REC, develop, maintain and expand research on managing ecosystem services on working landscapes | HREC Director and HREC staff in collaboration with SFREC Director and UC academics and industry | • Studies conducted on animal nutrition, behavior, and wildlife interactions  
• Studies conducted on how to utilize grazing animals as a management tool to address wildfire fuels, invasive species management, and wildlife population dynamics  
• Research results shared between RECs |
STRATEGIC DIRECTION #3

HREC’s rich natural resources and diverse facilities are attractive to a wide range of stakeholders, including livestock producers, wine grape growers and food system operators, as well as government agencies, universities, private enterprises, and the public. The REC is also uniquely positioned to advance sustainable management practices that satisfy the needs of land managers, ranchers, and agricultural producers, while preserving environmental quality. HREC will build on existing working relationships and create new partnerships to overcome funding limitations by increasing research and extension activities, pursuing new eco-tourism opportunities, and establishing the REC as a regional hub of knowledge around sustainable resource management.

Goals
1. Maintain and enhance ecosystem integrity
2. Increase viability of livestock and grazing operations

Intended Outcomes
• Sustainable operations, including grazing operations that maintain or enhance the ecosystem at HREC.
• Demonstration and delivery of best management practices and applied management through research.
• Development and demonstration of economic value of ecological benefits of HREC.
Goal 1: Maintain and enhance ecosystem integrity

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<tr>
<td>A. Conduct an inventory of all environmental resources (biodiversity, water, ecosystem services)</td>
<td>HREC Director, HREC staff and UC Academics</td>
<td>• Environmental resource inventory</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Develop or update a natural resource management plan</td>
<td>HREC Director, HREC staff, and UC Academics</td>
<td>• Natural resource management plan</td>
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<td>• BMPs related to ecological issues, restoration, pest management</td>
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Goal 2: Increase viability of livestock and grazing operations

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<tr>
<td>A. Assess ecological and economic viability of current and alternative grazing operations and practices</td>
<td>HREC Director, HREC staff, and UC academics</td>
<td>• Completed assessments that includes the economic viability of sheep</td>
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<td>• Best Management Practices on fire grazing, eco-grazing, etc.</td>
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<td>• Comparison between economics of a research center and commercial operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Develop a livestock and grazing management plan</td>
<td>HREC Director, SFREC Director, UC Animal Science, HREC staff, and UC academics</td>
<td>• Publication of best management practices for ecological and economic viability</td>
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<td>• Tools that are economically and financially viable</td>
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<td>C. Identify infrastructure needs that are consistent with assessment and management plan</td>
<td>HREC Director and HREC staff</td>
<td>• List of determinations</td>
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Strengthen and Enhance Staffing and Resources

Core HREC staff will continue to focus on HREC’s mission and goals. Current challenges include increasing costs associated with maintaining and supporting research projects, facilities that need updating, and a lack of accommodations to support the Shippey Hall conference facility. Securing critical positions and infrastructure to meet our core mission and goals will require new funding sources, new partners, and exploring new opportunities such as private events designed to support our mission while providing profit to offset research and extension costs. Staff support from external sources will be required for the fiscal growth required to meet our mission. In order to pursue the emerging concept of developing HREC into a Hub for Ecosystem Services, it will further be essential to support innovative, and integrated or shared positions with other internal and external partners.

Goals
1. Improve facilities and infrastructure (dorms, trails, etc.)
2. Diversify funding sources

Intended Outcomes
- Infrastructure enhancements including trails, sheep barn, crop-seed facility, and new housing options to support staff, researchers, and programs.
- New funding sources and collaborations with other institutions that increase the research and extension capacity of HREC.
- Staff and volunteer support that meets the needs of HREC research and extension activities.
- Upgraded internet and conferencing capabilities, along with technical support staff resulting in greater reliability for online instruction and other uses in research and extension.
## STRATEGIC DIRECTION #4

### Goal 1: Improve facilities and infrastructure (dorms, trails, etc.)

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| A. Conduct needs assessment that identifies new needs and needed improvements | HREC Director in and HREC staff in collaboration with the RAC | • Housing plan with improved researcher housing and dorms  
• Improved facilities including labs, crop seed facility, state of art sheep barn and shearing facility  
• Improved trails  
• Improved basic infrastructure such as roads and water with sustainable components such as catchments |
| B. Expand technology capacity and expertise | HREC Director and HREC staff | • Improved technology resources and systems that support an increase in the utilization of HREC  
• Faster more reliable internet  
• Webinar ready conference facility |
| C. Update Shippey Plan as a central core component for Hopland | HREC Director and HREC staff | • Shippey maintained  
• Programs and events hosted at Shippey for wide variety of programs and stakeholders  
• Programs and events that bring in for-profit events that are managed to return revenue to UC ANR  
• Long-term revenue/financial plan for Shippey |

### Goal 2: Diversify funding sources

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<tr>
<td>A. Develop a funding plan to pay for infrastructure improvements and to support permanent staff</td>
<td>HREC Director in collaboration with UC ANR Development Services, ANR Facilities, Planning and Management, and ANR Resource Planning and Management</td>
<td>• Funding plan to include a variety of fundraising options including capital, endowment, individual-giving, revenue generating activities, grants, etc.</td>
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| B. Explore opportunities to increase revenue generation through private enterprise | HREC Director in collaboration with UC ANR Senior Leadership | • New private enterprise revenue generating activities (e.g., internet café, B&B, weddings, photo shoots)  
• Development of standard operating procedures  
• Fee for service or full cost recovery |
| C. Conduct capital campaign(s) for new facilities | HREC Director in collaboration with UC ANR Development Services and ANR Resource Planning and Management | • Capital campaign  
• New resources available  
• New relationships with donors and sponsors  
• New and innovative fundraisers on site  
• Funding proposals |
| D. Start a competitive grant process or sector-supported, sponsor-funded project, driven by external stakeholders | HREC Director in collaboration with UC ANR Contracts and Grants, Senior Leadership, and Industry | • New grants offered through HREC  
• New sponsored research  
• Collaborative grants |
| E. Identify grant opportunities from a variety of external private and public sources | HREC Director in collaboration with UC ANR Contracts and Grants | • Grant proposals submitted |
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Website: http://ucanr.edu/sites/anrstaff/Diversity/Affirmative_Action/.