

TAB 2

Washington State Conservation Commission Regular Business Meeting



The Washington State Conservation Commission (Commission/WSCC) met in regular session on May 15, 2014 in Kelso, Washington. Commissioner Peters called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Jim Peters, Chair
Clinton O’Keefe, Vice Chair, East Region
Larry Davis, West Region
Lynn Brown, Central Region
Lynn Bahrych, Member
Jim Kropf, WSU-Puyallup
George Tuttle, Dept. of Agriculture
Sally Toteff, Department of Ecology (DOE)
Todd Welker, Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Alan Stromberger, WA Association of Conservation Districts (WACD)

COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT

Mark Clark, Executive Director
Debbie Becker, Admin. & Finance Director
Ray Ledgerwood, Program Facilitator
Ron Shultz, Policy Director
Bill Eller, SE Regional Manager
Lori Gonzalez, Administrative Assistant
Carol Smith, CREP Coordinator
Laura Johnson, Communications & Outreach Specialist

PARTNERS REPRESENTED AT THIS MEETING

Roylene Rides-at-the Door, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Dave Vogel, (WACD)
Don Larsen, Department of Fish and Wildlife

GUESTS ATTENDED

Craig Nelson, Okanogan CD, Josh Monahan, King CD, James Weatherford, Thurston CD, Tom Burgert, Executive Director of the Washington Wildlife Recreation Coalition (WWRC), John Merz, Foster Creek CD, Carolyn Kelly, Skagit CD, and Kat Mahan, Pierce CD.

Consent Agenda

Mark Clark, SCC Executive Director, added a Capital budget proposal for the Commission to consider. Mr. Clark also presented a copy of a letter the Washington Association of Wheat Growers submitted for commission member consideration during the budget portion of the agenda.

Motion by Commissioner Stromberger to approve the consent agenda (March 20 Meeting Minutes, Attendance of ED and Chair to attend NASCA and NACD Meeting in September 2014). Seconded by Commissioner Davis. Motion passed.

Public Comment

Tom Burgert, Executive Director of the WWRC, provided a brief update to commission members regarding the Washington Wildlife Recreation Program farmland projects that were submitted by the close of May 1. \$22.7

million for farmland preservation. Congratulations to SCC Office of Farmland Preservation staff, Josh Giuntoli for the hard work put into receiving \$10 million for projects. He also congratulated Foster Creek who submitted an application and was rewarded in a specific category. Mr. Burgert welcomes the partnership of the Commission as the legislative season approaches.

Conservation District Elections

Bill Eller, SCC staff walked the commission members through the latest conservation district elections cycle. *He reported this is the first year in four years there have been no significant compliant issues for all 45 districts.* Mr. Eller said seven districts had trouble turning in paperwork on time, some due to human error, or newspapers did not run the advertisement even though the district sent it in. He also noted the “Election Calculator” provided and available to districts to help set their own election day, which then automatically calculates their deadlines for forms to be submitted.

Commissioner Brown to certify and announce the official winners for all 45 conservation district elections as set out in the staff memo provided in the meeting packets. Seconded by Commissioner Kropf. Motion passed.

Mr. Eller also stated that during the elections process, two policy issues came to light that need to be addressed within the Elections and Appointments Procedure Manual. It is the discrepancy of the definitions “due notice” as stated in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) and “print media” in the Elections and Appointments Manual. This discrepancy affects notification to the public about district elections and district election costs. SCC staff will follow the Commission’s procedure on policies that it is to provide opportunity for comment by sending out to all districts. Comments will then be gathered and prepared for Commission Board review and approval in July.

Motion by Commissioner Brown to review the election proposed changes and send out to districts as per the Commission’s procedure on policies for district comment. Seconded by Commissioner Davis. Motion passed.

Conservation District Appointed Supervisor Appointment

Lori Gonzalez, SCC staff provided background on the process for appointed supervisor applications. All applications provided for recommendation were submitted and received in the Commission Office by the March 31 deadline. The applications were also vetted by the regional commission members. Commissioner Larry Davis representing Western Washington, Commissioner Brown representing Central Washington and Commissioner O’Keefe representing Eastern Washington. The following appointments were made:

Motion by Commissioner Davis to appoint the uncontested conservation district appointments for the Western Region (*John Baugher- Clark CD, Russell Kastberg- Cowlitz CD, Glen Huntingford, Jefferson CD, Sharon Call- Kitsap CD, Robert Hayes- Lewis County CD, David Mackey- Mason CD, Allan Lougheed- Pacific CD, Gerald Rasmussen- San Juan CD, Wendy Pare- Skagit CD, Wes Raistakka- Wahkiakum CD, and Thomas Fournier- Whidbey Island CD*). **Seconded by Commissioner O’Keefe. Motion passed.**

Motion by Commissioner Davis to appoint Gary Waltenburg to the Grays Harbor Conservation District. Seconded by Commissioner Toteff. Motion passed.

Motion by Commissioner Davis to appoint Jason Salvo to the King Conservation District. Seconded by Commissioner Brown. Motion passed.

Motion by Commissioner Brown to appoint the uncontested conservation district appointments for the Central Region including the two applicants for Grant County. (*Michael Broeckel- Adams CD, Nicole Berg-Benton CD, David Guenther- C. Klickitat, Dan Roseburg and Don Underhill- Grant County CD, Arnold Swain-Yakima CD, Jerry Asmussen- Okanogan CD, Dirk VanSlageren- S. Yakima CD, and Kelly Clothier- Underwood CD*). **Seconded by Davis. Motion passed.**

Motion by Commissioner Tuttle to appoint Erin Bailey to the Palouse Rock Lake Conservation District. Seconded by Commissioner Welker. Motion passed. Commissioner O’Keefe abstained.

Motion by Commissioner O’Keefe to appoint the uncontested conservation district appointments for the Eastern Region (*Jerry Hendrickson- Asotin CD, Brandon VanDalsen- Pine Creek, Thomas Miller, Spokane CD*) **Seconded by Commissioner Tuttle. Motion passed.**

Motion by Commissioner O’Keefe to appoint Lynn Brown to the Kittitas Conservation District. Commissioner Tuttle seconded. Motion passed. Commissioner Brown abstained.

Motion by Commissioner O’Keefe to appoint Joseph Heller to the Whatcom Conservation District. Seconded by Commissioner Brown. Motion passed. Commissioner Davis abstained.

Motion by Commissioner O’Keefe to appoint Elaine Preston to fill the remainder of Lee Hall’s appointed term. Seconded by Commissioner Brown. Motion passed.

Policy Updates

Ron Shultz, SCC staff, updated the Commissioners on a letter submitted by the Washington Association of Wheat Growers requesting the Commission partner with them in creating a ‘wheat country caucus’. This would be to assist in a recent request to mandate specific practice implementation as a condition for landowner participation in incentive based conservation programs. There was some discussion around this topic and the following motion was made:

Motion by Commissioner Brown to direct staff to respond and to explore with the Wheat Growers, CD’s, and WACD on how to establish a Wheat Country Caucus to work on a variety of issues and how to engage partnerships and staff will report back during the July meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Tuttle. Motion passed.

District Technical Capacity Group Update

Josh Monaghan from King CD and James Weatherford, Thurston CD provided the commission members a FY15 budget request for Conservation District Technical Capacity including a summary of district comments received. Support was received for the White Paper presented at the March Commission Meeting in Dayton, WA. The Technical Employees Group have been working on increasing the already robust technical services provided by conservation districts by implementing additional training, mentoring, certification and monitoring concepts.

Good Governance

Ray Ledgerwood, SCC staff presented an interim report on the Good Governance status to date. A listing of districts was provided showing 34 districts in the green and 11 districts in the yellow. Mr. Ledgerwood provided a summary of work being done to address the 11 districts currently in the yellow area (opportunity for improvement).

A full report will be presented at the July Commission Meeting.

Foster Creek Habitat Conservation Program (HCP) presentation

Jon Merz, District Manager of the Foster Creek Conservation District presented to the Commission the district's current efforts to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to craft a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for Douglas County that would work to protect up to four threatened species (Pygmy rabbit, Washington Ground Squirrel, Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse, and the Greater Sage-Grouse) while meeting the needs of producers and farm operators.

CREP Technical Allocation for FY15 Funding

Carol Smith, SCC staff, CREP Coordinator provided a table listing districts requesting funding to carry out their CREP functions. The technical assistance is provided to eligible CREP districts to pay for staff time, travel, training, and equipment for activities that are directly related to implanting riparian restoration under CREP.

Motion by Commissioner O'Keefe to approve the CREP TA Allocation funding as presented by staff. Seconded by Commissioner Davis. Motion passed.

Skagit CD Firewise Funding Request

Carolyn Kelly, District Manager of the Skagit Conservation District submitted a budget request of \$10,000.00 to assist the SCC with coordinating the development of a comprehensive statewide Conservation District Firewise Program (CDFP). Ms. Kelly provided an outline of scope of work the group could begin work on immediately with deliverables by September. She mentioned this would be an opportunity for other districts as well. Mark Clark, Executive Director asked to hold this request and discuss at the July meeting in Okanogan. Commissioner Welker, Department of Natural Resources will look into his resources in the agency.

Ag Forestry Leadership Funding

Ag Forestry Leadership submitted a letter requesting funding to continue the support of the program at \$5,000.00. There are 24 seats and 30 applications this year. 60% are directly tied to the ground (producers). This means there are few seats for CD staff. Chair Jim Peters has been fortunate to speak a couple times to the AgForestry group on Tribal relations and how impressive the program is. Chair Peters also explained how difficult is to get into the program as he was on an interview panel in the past.

Motion by Commissioner O'Keefe to approve the funding request of \$5,000 requested by the Ag Forestry Leadership group. Seconded by Commissioner Stromberger. Motion passed.

FY15 Funding

Motion by Commissioner Davis to authorize FY15 CD funding at the staff recommendation level listed on the chart provided. Seconded by Commissioner Tuttle. Motion passed.

Engineering FY15 Funding

Motion by Commissioner Brown to approve the staff recommendations for FY15 Engineering funding. Seconded by Commissioner O'Keefe. Motion passed.

Livestock TA for FY15

Motion by Commissioner Davis to approve the staff recommendations for FY15 Livestock TA funding to districts at the same level as FY14. Seconded by Commissioner O'Keefe. Motion passed.

FY15 Funding for Technical Capacity Building, WACD Contract, and WADE

Proposals were provided in the Commission meeting packet to fund the following programs. The following motions were made:

Motion by Commissioner Brown to approve the staff recommendations for FY15 funding of the Technical Capacity (\$80,000), WACD (\$37,500), and WADE (\$20,000) proposals. Seconded by Commissioner O'Keefe. Motion passed.

Non Shellfish Funding

Non shellfish water quality bucket is \$4.5 million dollars. The Commission funded all projects that were in the CPDS system by the July 1, 2013 pull date. They have been funded by returned money, and toxics. There is about \$900k capital money to move forward with and get projects accomplished by June 30.

Mark Clark would like to reconvene the oversight committee to assist in getting these funds out the door for projects. Capital non shellfish subcommittee: Commissioners Welker and O'Keefe, along with Debbie Becker.

Motion by Commissioner O'Keefe to allow the commission subcommittee to convene and allocate funding for the next set of non shellfish conservation district projects (July 1, 2013- September 1, 2013) to get the \$900, 000 on the ground. Seconded by Commissioner Welker. Motion passed.

2015-2017 Budget All Districts Meeting

Ray Ledgerwood and Debbie Becker reviewed the Operating budget work and criteria to Commission. The all districts meeting in Ellensburg was split into two groups, Operating and Capital. The Commission also partnered with WACD and WADE for this process.

Public comment:

Kat Mahan from Pierce CD spoke on behalf of her Board in regards to the All District Meeting in Ellensburg and thanked the staff that tried hard to come to a process with the districts. Said first day was tough, but by the

2nd day, a lot of work was done and that everyone seemed to be in concurrence. Pierce Board is in concurrence with the outcome.

Kathleen Whalen, Thurston CD and WADE President, felt that it was the best place for everyone to be in agreement. Seemed at least ¾ of districts were in attendance. Really pleased with the report being presented to the Commissioners at the meeting. There is still some work to be done on the Capital side, but not much.

Motion by Commissioner Stromberger to approve the 2015-2017 budget development process as described and instruct the Executive Director to engage district staff to assist with developing proposed budget decision packages, with expense approval by the Executive Committee. Seconded by Commissioner Davis. Motion passed.

Chair Peters adjourned the meeting at 4:35 p.m.