



Updated: November 2017

2017 Policy Initiative:

Habitat Projects, Permits, Approvals, and the SCC

This initiative aims to clarify statutes that reference tasks for the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) and conservation districts (CDs) related to permitting and incentives for salmon recovery and habitat restoration projects.

WHY IS THIS NEEDED?

Several statutes address roles for the SCC and conservation districts related to habitat improvement projects, permit review, and Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) of fish habitat enhancement projects.

These statutes have potential to support CD work, but clarification of statute language is needed before they can be fully implemented.

Statutes with roles for the SCC/CDs include:

- RCW 84.36.255: Exemption from real and personal property tax exemption for habitat, water quality, and water quantity improvements if such improvements are included under a written conservation plan approved by a conservation district.
- RCW 89.08.470: SCC development of a consolidated application process for permits for a watershed restoration project. Includes single permit application form for use by all responsible agencies.
- RCW 77.55.181: HPA approval of a fish habitat enhancement project, review and approval process for CD-sponsored projects, where the project complies with design standards established by the SCC.

PROPOSAL UNDER CONSIDERATION

The SCC and the Center for Technical Development (CTD) will convene a task group of CD staff to:

- Evaluate statutory provisions and determine applicability.
- Design path forward to complete statutory tasks.

The CTD and SCC will convene a second task group who, on a biennial basis, will update the list of best management practices eligible for tax exemptions under RCW 84.36.255.

WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU AND YOUR STAKEHOLDERS!

The SCC Board of Commissioners would like feedback on this initiative from CDs and partners. **Please talk with your local stakeholders about this proposal, and send us your feedback by COB on December 15, 2017 using the form on our website: scc.wa.gov/2017initiatives.**