



Washington State Conservation Commission Regular Business Meeting  
Kennewick, Washington  
November 30, 2017

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The Washington State Conservation Commission (Commission/SCC) met in regular session on November 30, 2017, in Kennewick, Washington. Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

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**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Lynn Brown, Chairman  
Jim Kropf, Vice-Chairman, WSU-Puyallup  
Larry Cochran, Eastern Region  
Dean Longrie, Western Region  
Daryl Williams, Member  
Sarah Spaeth, Member  
Kelly Susewind, Dept. of Ecology (DOE)  
Perry Beale, Dept. of Agriculture  
Tom Miller, President WA Association of Conservation Districts (WACD)  
Harold Crose, Central Region

**COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT**

Mark Clark, Executive Director  
Ray Ledgerwood, District Operations Manager  
Eleanor Dovey, Fiscal Manager  
Josh Giuntoli, Office of Farmland Preservation  
Lori Gonzalez, Executive Assistant  
Jillian Fishburn, Program Specialist  
Laura Johnson, Communications Coordinator  
Stu Trefry, Regional Manager  
Brian Cochrane, Habitat Monitoring Coordinator  
Bill Eller, VSP Coordinator and Elections Officer

**PARTNERS AT THE TABLE REPRESENTED AT THIS MEETING**

Roylene Rides at the Door, Natural Resource Conservation Service  
Michael Kuttel, Jr., WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife  
Lucy Edmondson, Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10  
Rod Hamilton, Farm Service Agency

**GUESTS ATTENDED**

David Murphy, Missouri Dept. of Conservation, Craig Nelson, Okanogan Conservation District (CD), Marie Lotz, Grant County CD, Larry Davis, Whatcom CD, Megan Stewart, Asotin CD, Nick Vira, NRCS, Monte Marti, Snohomish CD, Jennifer Boie, Palouse CD, Jeannette Dorner, Pierce CD and WACD, Patricia Hickey, WACD, Doug Rushton, Thurston CD, Sarah Moorehead, Thurston CD, Amy Franks, Thurston CD, Mike Tobin, N. Yakima CD, and Loren Meagher, N. Yakima CD.

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**GUEST SPEAKER:**

David Murphy, Commissioner of the Missouri Department of Conservation and chair of the campaign for Missouri's voter-approved sales tax to fund parks, soil, and water conservation, gave an outstanding verbal presentation to members, partners and guests. He shared the background of how Missouri successfully gained public support for conservation. The Design for Conservation Sales Tax Summary can be found online here <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/IH/7278.pdf>. Take home message: There may never be an ideal time to undertake a funding campaign. Start now. Do your best. Never stop.

Director Clark will have staff put together some talking points from his presentation he also gave to members of the WACD the previous day to share with members and conservation districts.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

### **Draft November 30, 2017 meeting minutes**

**Motion by Commissioner Longrie to approve the September 21, 2017 meeting minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Kropf. Motion passed.**

## **DISTRICT OPERATIONS**

### **Grant County Conservation District deannexation request**

The Grant County Conservation District recently received approval from the Grant County Commissioners for a system of rates and charges within Grant County. During the process, the district offered that if any member city elected to withdraw from the district, the CD would approve the request. The following member cities listed below elected to withdraw from the Grant County Conservation District.

Harold Crose, newly elected commissioner, also staff of Grant County CD, spoke of the situation and said conversations with the school districts are occurring, and are encouraging them to go and speak to the county to let them know what the impacts would be from not receiving the district's services. He also noted it was about 1/3 of the population who opted out.

Mr. Clark suggested the district could write the county back and let them know the opportunity this could bring and what the district can provide.

Commissioner Cochran, prior to vote, wanted note for the record, the commission is not entirely pleased with these member cities withdrawing from the district.

**Motion by Commissioner Williams to approve the deannexations of Royal City, Mattawa, Moses Lake, Coulee City, Electric City, and Ephrata as proposed by Grant County Conservation District. Seconded by Commissioner Cochran. Motion passed.**

### **Okanogan Conservation District petition for annexation request**

The Town of Conconully (Town), in Okanogan County, was excluded from the boundaries of the Loomis Conservation District when said District's boundaries were expanded in 1947 to include the non-incorporated lands around the Town. Through multiple boundary adjustments over the preceding decades the Loomis Conservation District was absorbed into what is now the Okanogan Conservation District.

The Town of Conconully now wishes to be annexed into the Okanogan Conservation District. The District and City, pursuant to RCW 89.08 and established procedure, submitted the attached *Petition for Inclusion of Additional Territory within the Okanogan Conservation District* for Commission approval.

**Motion by Commissioner Longrie to approve the inclusion of the incorporated Town of Concully into the territory of the Okanogan Conservation District (page 58-59). Seconded by Commissioner Crose.**

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) eligible stream additions

Brian Cochrane, SCC staff presented a request received from the Grays Harbor Conservation District staff to add approximately 0.51 miles of Forrest Creek in south-eastern Grays Harbor County into the CREP map of eligible streams. Brian presented a visual for members and guests of the stream segments requested and also noted it is also shown in their meeting packets as Exhibit A.

Commissioner Williams asked if this request had also been consulted with the Quinault Indian Nation (QIN). Mr. Cochrane verified with the district and affirmed they did consult with the QIN prior to seeking approval for the addition.

**Motion by Commissioner Longrie to approve designation of eligible stream segments for CREP on 0.51 stream miles in Grays Harbor CD per map at Exhibit A (pages 61). Seconded by Commissioner Cochran.**

**LUNCH PRESENTATION**

A heartfelt farewell and recognition was given to long time member and State Conservation Commission Chairman Lynn Brown.

**DISTRICT OPERATIONS- *continued***

Thurston Conservation District

Commissioner Longrie attended a recent board meeting of the Thurston Conservation District as an observer. He noted the supervisors were very disrespectful to staff and each other during this public meeting. Longrie also noted the chair put limitations on which public comment can be made and when. He found it to be very odd on how all of it was handled.

Patricia Hickey, the new Executive Director of the Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) also attended the meeting Commissioner Longrie attended. She noted she was horrified on how the behavior was given to the members of the public, staff and each other as well. Ms. Hickey stated she hold the SCC accountable to do something with the appointed member. The behavior displayed undermines everything we do and represent, and is not what we should allow to represent the community and SCC.

A letter from Thurston CD Board Supervisor, Samantha L. Fleischner was received electronically and displayed for members to review. Ms. Fleischner spoke of the following topics: Ongoing harassment and discrimination of board and staff, neglect of duties and spread of malicious misinformation, unethical conduct, and lack of good governance.

Public comment: Sarah Moorhead, interim Executive Director of the Thurston Conservation District spoke to the SCC board and noted "this has spread so deeply with board members and staff..."

Director Clark will be meeting with the Attorney General's Office next week to discuss the situation and will review the procedures on holding a public hearing for the possible removal of CD board supervisors.

**Motion by Commissioner Miller to empower the Executive Director to issue a notice of a hearing to each supervisor of the Thurston Conservation District regarding removal of supervisors under RCW 89.08.200. Seconded by Commissioner Longrie. Motion passed.**

## **BUDGET**

Eleanor Dover, SCC staff presented the 2018 agency supplemental budget request that was submitted to the Office of Financial Management. At the September 2017 SCC meeting in Republic, staff received approval to submit several items for the budget request. Below are the amounts submitted for the following items: CREP Riparian Cost Share at \$3,500,000, CREP Riparian Contract \$4,000,000, CREP PIP Loan \$100,000, Shellfish \$4,000,000, Natural Resource Investment (non-shellfish) \$4,000,000, RCPP \$9, 145, 000, and Fire Recovery at \$3,000,000. Ms. Dovey provided additional detail to each item in the meeting packets on pages 75-76.

Director Clark shared a letter received from the Washington Cattlemen's Association regarding Substitute Senate Bill 5883 DNA speciation. The letter requested status of the funding and next steps. The SCC has a request for proposals currently out and will respond to Ms. Ryan, Executive Vice President.

## **Long-term Sustainable Funding Workgroup Update**

Larry Davis, workgroup member provided an update on the committee work done so far. The group narrowed down a very long list of ideas to five (5). As a group, they decided there is not enough time their work will be completed for the 2018 legislative session and will be recommending 2019 as a timeframe to have a strategy. Idea is to have a combined strategy, statewide and local for both conservation districts and the SCC. Raise everyone's boat.

There is a survey currently out to all supervisors for their input and ideas. As of today, the group has received over 100 responses. He noted they will be sending out another survey in a couple of weeks to request additional information needed to assist the workgroup in moving forward with their recommendations.

## **POLICY PROGRAMS**

### **Office of Farmland Preservation- Conservation Easements**

Josh Giuntoli, SCC staff and OFP Coordinator provided members the following background information and presentation:

A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement wherein a landowner agrees to sell or donate certain rights associated with his or her property – often the right to subdivide – and a private organization or public agency agrees to hold the right to enforce the landowner's promise not to exercise those rights.

The Conservation Commission is authorized under RCW 64.04.105 to hold an interest in real property so long as it's an interest less than fee simple, and is for the purpose of protecting, preserving, maintaining,

improving, etc., the values of the property. These values must also be consistent with a values and purpose of the Commission.

Districts, as a “governmental sub-division of the State of Washington” are authorized by RCW 89.08.220 (5) “To obtain options upon and to acquire in any manner, except by condemnation, by purchase, exchange, lease, gift, bequest, devise, or otherwise, any property, real or personal, or rights or interests therein; to maintain, administer, and improve any properties acquired, to receive income from such properties and to expend such income...”

Josh also presented to the commission the current activities and some options for path forward on this item. The SCC currently has funding for CDs and is awaiting funds from the Recreation Conservation Office (RCO) for ag easements.

Land Trust Accreditation and Quasi-Governmental information was provided and discussed how it could work.

Patricia Hickey has a lot of experience working with ag easements and Land Trusts during her time in California and has gone through the accreditation program. She would like to work with Commissioner Spaeth in an advisory role and work with Josh on becoming more transparent in this process.

Commissioner Spaeth would like to see conversations continue with the WA Land Trusts and PCC.

A small group volunteered to assist Josh in drafting a policy. The group members are Commissioners Spaeth, Miller, Longrie and to also include WACD director, Patricia Hickey.

#### Irrigation Efficiency Program Guidelines proposal

At the September SCC meeting in Republic, WA, members authorized staff to move three policy amendments out to the districts for a 45 day comment period. SCC staff, Jon Culp stated to the members that as of November 15, day 40 of the comment period, staff had not received any comments. Staff continued to monitor the comments up until the meeting and reported none had been received

Due to the lack of time on the agenda, two of the policies (Removing the project cap on larger pipeline (conveyance) projects, and the Quit Dees Claim policy, were tabled to the January 2018 meeting. Members were able to discuss and approve the Fish Screen Cost Eligibility policy.

**Motion by Commissioner Cochran to approve the amended policy and guideline for Fish Screen Cost Eligibility- Fish screens should be allowed as eligible expenses when a part of an Irrigation Efficiencies project. (pages 95-98) Seconded by Commissioner Longrie.**

#### Commission Chair and Vice chair election

**Motion by Commissioner Beale to elect Jim Kropf as Chair of the Conservation Commission. Seconded Commissioner by Commissioner Williams. Motion passed.**

**Motion by Commissioner Beale to elect Dean Longrie as Vice-chair of the Conservation Commission. Seconded by Commissioner Miller. Motion passed.**

Chair Kropf adjourned the meeting at 2:27 p.m.