

**Approved July 19, 2018**



Washington State Conservation Commission Regular Business Meeting  
Pullman, Washington  
May 17, 2018

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The Washington State Conservation Commission (Commission/SCC) met in regular session on May 17, 2018, in Pullman, Washington. Chairman Kropf called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

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**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Jim Kropf, Chairman  
Dean Longrie, Vice-chairman, West Region  
Harold Crose, Central Region  
Daryl Williams, Governor Appointed Member  
Sarah Spaeth, Governor Appointed Member  
Perry Beale, Dept. of Agriculture  
Steve Hummel, Dept. of Ecology (DOE) on behalf of Kelly Susewind  
Steve Harris, Dept. of Natural Resources on behalf of Trevor McConchie  
Thomas Miller, WA Association of Conservation Districts (WACD)

**COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT**

Mark Clark, Executive Director  
Ray Ledgerwood, District Operations Manager  
Ron Shultz, Policy Director  
Eleanor Dovey, Fiscal Manager  
Lori Gonzalez, Executive Assistant  
Laura Johnson, Communications Coordinator

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

Rod Hamilton, Farm Service Agency  
Roylene Rides at the Door, State Conservationist, Natural Resource Conservation Service  
Michael Kuttel, Jr., WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife  
Nick Peak, Environmental Protection Agency  
Patricia Hickey, Washington Association of Conservation Districts

**GUESTS ATTENDED**

Nick Vira, NRCS, Doug Rushton, Thurston Conservation District (CD), Megan Stewart, Asotin CD, James Schierman, Palouse Rock Lake, CD, Amy McKay, Whitman CD, Brian Bell, Whitman CD, Ryan Baye, WACD, Pam Furchtenicht, Palouse CD, Jennifer Boie, Palouse CD, Mary Collins, Palouse CD,

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**PRESENTATIONS**

**Washington State University**

Dr. Rich Koenig, Associate Dean and Director of Washington State University (WSU) Extension. He is also the current interim Chairman for Crops and Soils and Horticulture. Dr. Koenig shared information on WSU's programs and budget. Noted, the fiscal health of WSU can be found on their website:

<https://wsu.edu/fiscal-health/>

He stated WSU is another partner and resource for conservation districts.

*College of Agriculture, Human and Natural Resource Sciences (CAHNRS)*- one of the most diverse colleges. They will have a new Dean, Mr. Andre-Denis Girard Wright starting June 1. WSU CAHNRS is #1 in USDA fund expenditures, CAHNRS is also the number one college at WSU in extramural funding (\$62 mil in 2017).

*Wheat and Small Grain*- There are useful decision tools on their website: <http://smallgrains.wsu.edu/variety/>. Some of the tools are: Herbicide comparison tool, Herbicide Mechanisms of Action (MOA) Tools, Pulse Crop Tool, Wheat MOA Tool, Residue Production Calculator and more.

Roylene Rides at the Door, NRCS State Conservationist is the Chair for the Soil Health Committee at NRCS and would like to connect with Dr. Koenig on some of WSU's efforts.

Commissioner Crose mentioned to Dr. Koenig how beneficial it would be for students to become interns at the conservation districts to help develop new conservation planners.

Ray Ledgerwood, SCC staff noted districts and SCC staff attend career day for WSU and talk to students about conservation. The SCC has an internship program with certain districts and assists with some funding for the effort.

### **Farm Service Agency**

Brian Dandel, became the State Director for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) in September. He is from Ferry County. FSA is a tool for agriculture producers. Big challenge and opportunity with NRCS and FSA, will be the first co-located office building. He mentioned there will be a lot of opportunity to work together with the distinct work they do, and the values they both have. Farm Service and Farm Loan programs. USDA has been voted the best department to work for.

Chris Beeker, State Director for the United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Program will be retiring soon.

Mr. Dandel noted the Farm Bill will be a process. Senator Roberts in Kansas sees a light at the end of tunnel for the CRP deal. He does see opportunity in the Farm Bill.

Commissioner Crose brought a couple items up for Mr. Dandel to consider. In Kittitas County, which is currently under shared management – to continue services as they need to maintain availability with the County. Mr. Crose also gave credit to the Grant County Office that has been understaffed for quite some time, the person in the position is doing a great job.

Mr. Dandel said FSA currently doing workload analytics.

Mark Clark, Executive Director said they made attempts while visiting Washington DC to allow the state via the conservation districts to assist in the workload. Many producers are being cheated on services because of the lack of staff to assist. Mr. Clark said there are district staff that can handle some of FSA's systems. If we can begin to look at what the future brings, we should look at shared workload to provide the services the producers in our state need.

Commissioner Longrie thanked Mr. Dandel for his time and finished with a question: What do you see for the future of FSA? Mr. Dandel responded: To be the voice for the producers, to promote agriculture and would like to see as much access to markets as possible. We also have a serious problem with trade and would like to see it better.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

The March 15, 2018 draft meeting minutes, were presented for Commission approval.

**Motion by Commissioner Longrie to approve the March 15, 2018 draft SCC Business Meeting minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Beale. Motion passed.**

### *Public comment prior to Budget and District Operations*

Jennifer Boie, Palouse CD- commented on budget item, Exhibit 2, page 92 in the [meeting packets](#). Stated the SCC is setting a precedent of funding districts at a lower level for districts running programs in a multi-county. Districts still need to run the same processes. If we get to a base allocation for all districts it is going to put a lot of pressure on those who are not consolidated. Ms. Boie reminded the commissioners of the resolution passed in 2013- WACD/WSCC to work with legislature on consolidation—this should be voluntary. Please treat multi-counties as equal.

Amy McKay, Whitman CD commented on budget –Whitman should get allocated equal money as the other districts. Livestock money especially. Please consider giving as much money as the other districts. It will help with capacity building- allow hiring an extra staff person to do the day to day duties so the district manager can go out to landowners and do outreach. Providing equal money will help the resource concerns.

James Schierman, Palouse Rock Lake CD commented on budget- echoes Jennifer and Amy. Just because there are four counties doesn't mean there is less work. The district could use more staff support. With equal allocation – all four districts can get more conservation on the ground together. Please consider equal allocation.

## **BUDGET**

### **Agency Budget Update**

Eleanor Dovey, SCC staff, provided the agency budget update (page 90). Projections are looking like the SCC will not be able to do additional funding this year as we have in the past, unfortunately.

Ms. Dovey walked through the worksheet provided. There is still some funding in CREP cost share and Brian Cochrane will be addressing. RCPP funding is still available and has not yet been allocated, Ron Shultz and Shana Joy are addressing these funds and hope to have it fully allocated. PIP has run into a slight problem due to the Office of Financial Management saying this is a revolving account and bumped funding from \$100k to \$50k. Ms. Dovey will be looking at submitting for supplemental funding to bump that number up. Shellfish funding- Ron Shultz, program lead will be able to move \$700k out. Funding has been set aside to work with DNR on shellfish projects in the Willapa to provide shellfish growers find the means to alleviate the ghost shrimp issues, beach restoration also needed at Washaway Beach, as well as

assisting shellfish growers find new shellfish grow areas. Ms. Dovey also noted Natural Resource Investment (NRI) funding is also used for cultural resources.

## Operating

Ms. Dovey also provided background to the proposed fiscal year 2019 Conservation District allocation. Exhibits 1 and 2 are found on pages 91 and 92 of the [May Commission Meeting Packet](#).

Certain programs are funded from the state's general fund, which is appropriated annually. At the July 20, 2017 Commission meeting, the Commission approved funding the Implementation, Engineering, and NRCS Task Orders for fiscal year 2018. Below describes the proposed allocations for approval for those same programs areas for fiscal year 2019 as follows:

1. **SCC Administration (Exhibit 1):** The operating budget passed by the legislature allows for administration funding day-to-day operations of commission staff in an amount comparable to fiscal year 2018. The legislature made some adjustments resulting from assumptions regarding pension costs and our cost for certain central agency expenses. Salaries and benefits are adjusted for cost of living increases. All other expenses are expected to remain at levels comparable to FY 2018.
2. **Implementation Allocations (Exhibit 2):** SCC staff recommends allocating Implementation funds as set out in Exhibit 2. Funding would be reduced in cases where more than one district is located within one county. Specifically, two districts in a county would each receive \$65,000; more than two districts in a county would receive \$60,000 each. Grant Conservation District receives \$114,000 in FY 2019, pursuant to the terms of the district consolidation transition proposal approved by the Commission at the May 2016 Commission meeting. All other districts receive \$90,000. This approach reserves \$185,000 available for capacity-building. Districts would need to apply for these separately.
3. **Engineering Allocations (Exhibit 2):** SCC staff recommend funding Engineering allocations in the same manner as FY 2018.
4. **Task Orders (Exhibit 2):** During FY 2018, SCC staff renegotiated the master agreement with NRCS to reduce SCC's share of task order commitment to 25% of each task order. This allows completion of more task orders, at a lower overall cost to SCC. The majority of task orders awarded in FY 2018 extend into FY 2019; these awards are listed on Exhibit 2. In addition, SCC agreed to fund matching funds for two NACD grants with a commitment in FY 2019 of \$94,852. This leaves a maximum of approximately \$50,000 of state funds that could be used for NRCS Task Orders in FY 2019. SCC staff recommend, as was the case in fiscal years 2017 and 2018, SCC staff in consultation with NRCS be authorized to approve and execute new task orders within available funds.
5. **Livestock TA (Exhibit 2):** Livestock TA is funded from the capital budget for Shellfish and Natural Resource Investments (NRI) budgets. Because the legislature did not pass a capital budget until February, 2018, Livestock TA projects were approved for one fiscal year only. In FY 2018, the Commission funded \$326,672.50 from Shellfish and \$143,876 from NRI for Livestock TA. SCC staff recommends funding Livestock TA at these same levels for FY 2019.

**Motion by Commissioner Longrie to approve the FY19 funding as set out in Exhibits 1 and 2 (meeting packet pages 91-92). Seconded by Commissioner Williams. Motion passed.**

## 2019-2021 Proposed Decision Packages

Ron Shultz, SCC staff presented to commission members the 2019-2021 budget timeline by date:

- ▶ April 25-26: CD meeting to review and discuss proposed decision packages
- ▶ May 16-17: Commission to discuss proposed decision packages at their regular meeting in the context of their strategic planning decisions the previous day. Approve further development of proposed decision packages – not final approval; rather, approval to continue development of the proposals.
- ▶ May – July: Continued work by WSCC staff and outreach to stakeholders and agencies. Finalize decision packages.
- ▶ Mid-August: WSCC special meeting to approve prioritization of decision packages, and approve submittal of budget. Commission also to approve any proposed legislation to be sought by the Commission during the 2019 legislative session.
- ▶ September 1, 2018: Operating and Capital budget proposals submitted to OFM.
- ▶ December 2018: Governor releases proposed 2019-21 operating and capital budgets.

The proposed packages with brief descriptions and proposed amounts were presented as shown in the [meeting packet](#) on pages 93-97.

**Operating budget proposals** (dollar figures are amounts previously requested and will change as proposals are developed):

Voluntary Stewardship Program: \$9,350,000  
Conservation Technical Assistance: \$5,030,000  
Working Lands: \$1,648,000  
Natural Disaster Preparedness and Recovery: \$630,000  
Fire Recovery/Firewise: \$6,460,000

At the All-Districts meeting, districts and staff also brought new ideas for consideration as new proposals:

### Education

Build a Conservation Education Network that enables conservation districts to meet demands for placed-based, career-connected curriculum that meets school district needs. Develop curriculum that meets NGSS, STEM, and incorporates the local agricultural and natural resource landscape into each lesson.

**Communications**: Current discussions with districts are focused on four areas of consideration:

- A. Community-based social marketing (CBSM)
  - Provide seed money for CDs to attend CBSM trainings and design/deliver CBSM programs to their communities.
- B. Adult education
  - No specific solution discussed; assume there would be interest in building capacity to develop adult learning curriculum/workshops.
- C. Urban / rural divide
  - Provide trainings for CDs in mediation, conflict resolution, and collaborative negotiation related to natural resources/land management issues.
  - Develop partnership with network of dispute resolution centers

- D. General communications capacity
- No specific solution discussed as of yet.

Science Program: Develop a new program at the Commission encompassing the following areas:

- Research Coordination
- Certification and Technical Capacity
- Outreach, Education, and Support
- Monitoring and BMPs

This proposal will also include funding for continued work on soil health and DNA.

**Capital budget proposals**: (dollar figures are amounts previously requested and will change as proposals are developed):

NOTE on CREP – Commission staff are exploring the option of combining the two CREP accounts into one account.

CREP Contract: \$4,007,400  
CREP Cost Share: \$3,500,000  
Shellfish Funding: \$6,000,000  
Natural Resource Investments: \$8,000,000  
Match for RCPP: \$9,646,200  
Farmland Preservation: \$4,000,000

**Engineering Project Design and Implementation** **\$2,700,000**

NOTE: OFM recommendation is to include this proposal in both the shellfish and natural resource investment requests.

This funding request was to provide financial support to partially fund the cost associated with maintaining the SCC PE program for each regional engineering area.

## **Elections**

Bill Eller, SCC elections officer, presented the conservation district election results to members as shown in their meeting materials on page 99. Mr. Eller reported 26 districts automatically re-elected their incumbent and 58% of the districts automatically re-elected their incumbent. 19 (42%) of districts held their elections. Mr. Eller gave credit to district staff for solving most issues surrounding rules and compliance. He did mention the issues that did occur were big, and the SCC is looking into them further.

Mr. Eller recommended the Commission certify 44 out of the 45 conservation district elections. An issue with the Whatcom Conservation Commission is currently under investigation and staff should be able to report back their findings by the next Commission meeting in July.

**Motion by Longrie to certify and announce the official winners of 44 of the 45 conservation district elections. Seconded by Crose. Motion passed.**

**Motion by Commissioner Williams to allow staff additional time to further investigate issues from the Whatcom CD election for a final recommendation at the July 19, 2018 meeting in Mason County. Seconded by Commissioner Beale. Motion passed.**

## **DISTRICT OPERATIONS**

### **West Region Conservation District Appointments- Commissioner Longrie**

21 applications were received for conservation district appointed supervisor positions whose terms became available on May 17, 2018. Commissioner Longrie is the area elected representative for the West region. He along with the two other members conducted the interviews when there was multiple applicants or new applicants to a position. To be fair in the process, all applicants were asked the same questions. Mr. Longrie was pleased with how the interviews went and how it provided opportunity to have conversation. Commissioner Williams agreed and also enjoyed speaking with each applicant.

Commissioner Longrie did not move forward with a recommendation for appointment at the Thurston Conservation District until the current investigation has concluded.

**Motion by Commissioner Longrie to appoint all following supervisor applicants in the West region as listed on meeting packet pages 110-111. (Ben Smith, Clallam CD, James Scott, Cowlitz CD, William Knutsen, Jr., Tammie Perreault, Grays Harbor CD, King CD, Frank Varley, Kitsap, David Fenn, Lewis County CD, Jeff Ellingsen, Snohomish CD, Scott Gruber, Pierce CD, Vicki Heater, San Juan Islands, Edward Adams, Whidbey Island CD, Suzanne Snyder, mid-term Whatcom CD, and Larry Davis, Whatcom CD- full term). Seconded by Commissioner Crose. Motion passed.**

Commissioner Longrie is also a supervisor at the Clark Conservation District and has applied for reappointment. Commissioner Crose made the following recommendation for appointment.

**Commissioner Crose offered an amendment to include Dean Longrie, Clark CD. Seconded by Commissioner Williams. Motion passed.**

### **Central Region Conservation District Appointments- Commissioner Crose**

12 applications were received for conservation district supervisor appointments. Commissioner Harold Crose is the Central region representative and made the following recommendation for appointments:

**Motion by Beale to appoint the following supervisor applicants (Rob Dewald, Adams CD, Jack Clark, Benton CD, Roger Wristen, Cascadia CD, Stephen Cunningham, Central Klickitat CD, John McLean, Foster Creek, Brad Bailie, Franklin CD, Gail Thornton, North Yakima CD, Joe Sprauer, South Douglas CD, Peter Mercer to the Eastern Klickitat CD, Ky Shinn, South Yakima CD, Barbara Bailey to Underwood CD) in the central region as listed on meeting packet pages 111. Seconded by Spaeth. Motion passed.**

### **Eastern Region Conservation District Appointments- Commissioner Cochran (Ray Ledgerwood)**

In the absence of Commissioner Cochran, Commissioners Longrie and Crose conducted interviews for the 14 applications received in the East region.

**Motion by Commissioner Longrie to appoint the following supervisor applicants (Jason Schlee, Asotin CD, Cody Chapman, Columbia, David Hedrick, Ferry, Jeff Schibel, Lincoln CD, Chris Heitstuman, Palouse, David Johnson, Palouse Rock Lake CD, Michael Hastings, Pomeroy, Randall Leestma, Pend Oreille CD, Tom McKern, Stevens Co. CD, Edward Chvatal, Jr., Walla Walla CD, Bryan Jones, Whitman CD) in the eastern region as listed on meeting packet page 112. Seconded by Commissioner Miller. Motion passed.**

## **POLICY/PROGRAMS**

In the interest of time, Policy Director, Ron Shultz emailed the Commission members a policy update and provided a quick update.

Department of Fish and Wildlife just released the final Priority Habitat Species (PHS) document on May 17. PHS is not out for comment and due back by July 18. SCC will work with the staff and Nichole Embertson from Whatcom to take a look and provide comment.

DNA Grant - \$250k budget proviso. SCC staff, Karla Heinitz coordinated efforts with an advisory group to review proposals, rank and select the final candidate.

Thurston Conservation District Investigation- Staff need more time. Original time was April 30, however, the agency has a few more interviews to be done. We will complete the review with a set of recommendations for members review by end of May. We have Kirk Robinson on staff who has knowledge and background in working on investigations. He has been doing a great job.

Process- once investigation report is done, it will go to Mark Clark, Executive Director with all recommendations to move forward. If there is removal for malfeasance, there will be a 60-day notice for a hearing, similar to an administrative hearing and testimony will be taken.

**Motion by Commissioner Longrie to support staff to move forward with rule making, regarding public records requests. Seconded by Commissioner Miller. Motion passed.**

## **COMMISSION OPERATIONS**

### **Strategic Plan**

Staff will take back all of the information shared from Wednesday's session with members and partners. A follow up with next steps forward will be provided at the July 19 Commission meeting in Mason County.

### **Executive Director Review**

Vice-Chairman's role to lead effort. Commissioner Longrie along with Commissioners Williams and Beale will assist with the effort. A report will be pulled together and will be discussed among members at the July 19 meeting.

Chairman adjourned meeting at 2:51 p.m.