

WACD Annual NE Area Meeting

October 14, 2019

Host: Spokane Conservation District

Attendees:

Washington State Conservation Commission	Carol Smith, Jim Kropf, Shana Joy, Bill Eller, Mike Baden
Washington Association of Conservation Districts	Tom Salzer, Jan Salzer, Ryan Baye, Larry Davis
Natural Resource Conservation Service	Roylene Comes At Night, Wynea Buford
Washington Department of Ecology	Chad Atkins
Ferry Conservation District	Dave Hedrick, Charlotte Coombes
Lincoln County Conservation District	Elsa Bowen, Braidy Haden, Chris Laney, Jeff Schibel , Josh Sherwood
Pend Oreille Conservation District	Alex Case-Cohen, Randall Leestma, David Marcell, Mike Mumford, George Stuvenga
Spokane Conservation District	Jerry Scheele, Vicki Carter, Wendy Knopp, Tom Miller, Barry Tee, Jeannie Jesseph, Walt Edelen
Stevens County Conservation District	Dean Hellie, Linda Hansen

Welcome and Introductions

Jerry Scheele, Spokane CD Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, opened the meeting at 9:00. He welcomed the group and invited everyone to introduce themselves.

Conservation Leadership Forum

Washington State Conservation Commission

Chair and Executive Director

Jim Kropf, Commission Chair, gave an overview of Commission activities. He announced the new staff at WSCC including the new Executive Director, Carol Smith. Ray Ledgerwood's retirement was announced.

Carol Smith shared the story that has lead her to her current position as WSCC Executive Director. The Supplemental Decision packages have been submitted to Office of Financial Management for approval on the state budget. The Commission didn't receive all they asked for which is why they are asking for supplemental money. She presented the following talking points:

1. RCPP –The program has a gap of \$2.25 Million. There are 6 RCPP programs across the state.
2. CREP –Commission wants to increase the incentive program. They want to see increased salmon recovery areas. They have received many requests involving the PIP loan.

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Tom Salzer is the incoming Executive Director of WACD effective January 2, 2020.

Ryan Baye is serving as the Interim Executive Director.

The 2020 National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting is February 8-12 in Las Vegas.

Scholarships are available for anyone who hasn't attended a National Convention.

The 2019 WACD Annual Conference is December 2-4 in Tacoma. This year's theme is Rising to the Challenge.

Baye distributed an update of resolutions that were adopted last year.

Five positions on the WACD Board are open for elections.

WACD is considering alternative ways to calculate membership dues. Please contact them if you have feedback regarding this issue. The process will be voted on at the Annual Meeting.

Natural Resources Conservation Services

State Conservationist Roylene Comes At Night

Roylene Comes At Night provided an overview of NRCS activities.

She explained the financial situation and staffing restrictions at the NRCS. They have money, but not enough staff. The NRCS is looking to increase their staff size. They are having trouble filling open positions.

She reviewed funding and projects impacting the tribes.

She is seeing an increased commitment to projects that improve the environment for salmon and orca recovery.

The RCPP covers 54% of Washington State. The new farm bill allows for renewal of RCPP contracts.

The NRCS will transition to new national CART software system in 2020. One of the changes will be that planners must have their conservation plan completed to submit application.

Washington Department of Ecology

Regional Manager Chad Atkins

Chad Atkins reviewed the current grant funding cycle. They only have about 25% of normal funding available this year. They anticipate more will be available next year. He recommended that CDs submit their projects as normal this year even if the chances of being funded are reduced.

The DOE is hiring new staff into the Eastern Region. A change that CDs will see is that one staff will be assigned as Watershed Implementation Lead to improve water quality in our region.

Question and Answer Interactive Panel Session for Audience and WSCC, WACD, and NRCS Leadership

Questions were asked throughout the presentations.

Resolutions

Two resolutions were presented by the Spokane CD.

The first one is short titled: Identifying on-farm renewable energy development/use & soil health practice adoption as high priority goals.

Wendy Knopp from the Spokane CD moved to adopt this resolution to forward to WACD. George Stuiwenga from the Pend Oreille CD seconded. Motion carried.

The second resolution is short titled: Improving Association & District Governance Processes.

This motion is to adopt a model of governance. It will provide governance structure and role clarity.

Wendy Knopp from the Spokane CD moved to adopt this resolution to forward to WACD. Charlotte Coombes from the Ferry CD seconded. Motion carried.

District Issues and Presentations

Dave Hedrick, Director of Ferry CD

Dave shared his journeys that lead him to become a Director for the Ferry CD this year. This is a year of transition for the district as he learns the opportunities and responsibilities of being a Director.

The Ferry CD has been working on 3F2P.

They have been developing the Republic/Curlew Greenhouse program in association with the school district.

Elsa Bowen, Director of Lincoln CD

Partnerships have been the key to their successes in the last year.

They have completed RCPPs.

They created an online weed map to help identify crisis areas in their district.

Currently they are building a Water Coalition.

David Marcell, Director of Pend Oreille CD

Erosion on the Pend Oreille river system is one of the biggest issues they face. They are using NRI grants for shoreline repair.

They are increasing their partnerships including the local PUD for funding of projects.

They created a Project Management and Permitting flow chart using Smart Sheets.

Social media has been productive for the CD.

Dean Hellie, Director of Stevens County CD

The VSP program is going strong.

The Stauffer Dairy project has been very successful.

A fish barrier was removed using 3F2P funds.

A Floating Wetland Program is being implemented with help from partners.

Forestry Contests continue.

Snow investigation program for kids is going well.

They are working on developing soil health principles to promote more holistic farming practices.

Vicki Carter, Director of Spokane CD

The Spokane CD credits its success in part to the support of dedicated long term Supervisors.

The Rates & Charges system will replace the County Assessment as a revenue source. It will begin in 2020.

The VSP is going well. One project is the South Spokane Farm Corridor. It is a pilot program to link consumers to farms.

The RCPP has been very successful.

They are building up the Farmed SMART Certification program partnering with the PNDSA.

The Commodity Buffer Program is developed by the Spokane CD. Over 108 acres of buffer have been installed.

The On-Site Septic Program has completed 164 projects.

Nine Firewise communities have been established.

The 2019 Annual Tree Sale put out 90,000 seedlings.

Over 200 veterans have gone through the Vets on the Farm program. This program spreads opportunity for veterans in farming.

Annual Farm and Food Expo is happening October 25 and 26.

Walt Edelen, Water Resources Manager for the Spokane CD, gave a presentation on the River Mile 17 Project. Erosion along Hangman Creek is a large problem. To date the Hangman Creek Stream Bank Stabilization Project is the largest project the SCD has taken on. This project provided 3200 linear feet of bank protection and over five thousand plants were installed.

Area Business

Approve minutes of 2018 Area Meeting

Changes to 2018 minutes:

Page one:

Change Scibel to Schibel

Page two:

Change CARRT to CART

Jim Baye, not Eddie Johnson seconded the motion to approve the resolution

Page three:

Spokane CD SRF program--change "1994 for low" to "1995 for no"

Lincoln CD Direct Seed Cost Share—change "\$2000 acres at 56" to "2000 acres at \$56"

Page four:

Area Business- change Knox to Knopp

Change Meeting adjourned from 2:4 to 2:40

Change "2018 NE Area Meeting will be hosted by Pend Oreille CD" to "2019 NE Area Meeting will be hosted by Spokane CD"

Wendy Knopp from the Spokane CD moved to approve the 2018 NE Area Meeting minutes with corrections. George Stuvenga from the Pend Oreille CD seconded. Motion carried.

Amendment of Area Articles and By-Laws

There are none for NE Area at this time.

Election of Area Director

Jeff Schibel is up for election next year.

Mike Mumford from the Pend Oreille CD is running for the position. No other nominees were brought forward.

Jeff Schibel from the Lincoln County CD moved for a unanimous ballot for Mike Mumford NE Area Director's position. Wendy Knopp from the Spokane CD seconded. It was unanimously approved.

Elections Discussion

Bill Eller, WSCC

The Commission wants transparent, fair and open elections for CDs.

An Election Committee met and has proposed changes to WAC on election process.

Some of the changes include:

- Change to RCW regarding absentee ballots.
- Change to availability of personal emails and phone numbers to spammers.
- Have one designated staffer be trained on elections.
- Eliminate requirement to have 25 signatures to run for election.
- Move all district elections to be held during same week in the year during March.

The target for implementation of election changes is 2021.
Contact Bill Eller if you have any comments on proposed changes.

Shana Joy, WSCC

There will possibly be a bill regarding conservation district elections in the next legislative session. WSCC would like to create its own bill if given the opportunity.

WSCC will send survey out for feedback and talking points regarding a bill and Conservation District elections.

WA Conservation Society

Larry Davis, President of the Conservation Society spoke about the function and advantages of the Society. It is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) and can be used to access mini grants to work with conservation districts. It is funded by an Annual CD and personal contributions. The Society publishes the Leaving a Legacy book to honor Conservationists that have passed on. They give out four \$500 mini grants every year.

Upper Columbia RC&D Council

Jerry Scheele, Chairman of the Upper Columbia RC&D Council shared some of the benefits that conservation districts can enjoy by partnering together. The Council can function as a financial umbrella for districts in the NE Area that need a nonprofit 501(c)(3). The Vets on the Farm (VOTF) program is a good example. Money for the VOTF program can come in through the Council that can't be received through a conservation district. The Council recently received \$35,000 for Veterans training that was inaccessible to the Spokane Conservation District. The Upper Columbia RC&D Council has a lot of potential to help conservation district programs.

Stevens Conservation District will host the 2020 WACD NE Area Meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2:49.