

Washington Association of Conservation Districts
Remote Connection through Zoom
March 21, 2022
Board of Directors March Work Session Minutes

Members Remotely Present

Mike Mumford, President (Pend Oreille CD)
Barbara Bailey, Secretary (Underwood CD)
Dave Fenn, Treasurer (Lewis CD)
Doug Rushton, National Director (Thurston CD)
Jeanette Dorner, Past President (Pierce CD)
Alan Chapman, Northwest Area Director (Whatcom CD)
Chris Porter, Northwest Area Director (King CD)
Lisa Zaborac, Southwest Area Director (Grays Harbor CD)
John Preston, North Central Area Director (Grant County CD)
John McLean, North Central Area Director (Foster Creek CD)
Jack Clark, South Central Area Director (Benton CD)
Jeff Schibel, Northeast Area Director (Lincoln County CD)
Annie Byerly, Southeast Area Director (Walla Walla County CD)
Bill Blake, WADE President (Skagit CD)

Others Remotely Present

Tom Salzer, WACD Executive Director
Jim Brown, WACD Director of Nursery Operations
Ryan Baye, WACD Director of Legislative and Membership Services
Roylene Comes at Night, NRCS State Conservationist
Christopher Pettit, WSCC Executive Director
Heather Christiansen, Whatcom CD Supervisor
Brandy Reed, Whatcom CD Executive Director
Linda Lyshall, Snohomish CD Executive Director

President Mumford called the meeting to order at 6:00. Ryan Baye took roll of those present and willing to introduce themselves, the two members of the public that were present declined to do so.

Partner Reports

Roylene Comes at Night largely spoke to the effects of the adopted federal omnibus budget on NRCS as an agency. She shared updates on her direct hiring authority, the number of FTE's in field offices, and spring enrollment deadlines for their programs. She answered questions about cuts to SNOTEL, as well the impact on similar state programs.

Christopher Pettit introduced himself to the Board as the new Executive Director for the commission. He shared some of his initial reactions to his first few weeks on the job and his background. He was asked about his impressions about his first WSCC meeting the previous week.

Area Focus

Linda Lyshall spoke for Snohomish CD, mentioning taking over a forest stewardship program from King CD and the general need for forestry programs in her area. She gave details on a upcoming forestry and

stormwater technical manual and handbook, creating a toolkit in partnership with others this past fall for both their constituents and others in the Puget Sound. She also announced that Snohomish CD recently acquired 12 acres to start building an office next year. She ended with her gladness to have Brandy Reed as a fellow district manager.

Heather Christiansen as Whatcom CD Chair echoed the sentiments of Linda in having Brandy as the new District Manager. The Whatcom Board of Supervisors was hoping to present Rates and Charges to the county council before the end of the year. She also mentioned that their supervisor election was happening tomorrow. Alan Chapman mentioned the recent flooding in the Whatcom area, and Whatcom CD staff rising the occasion of pumping lagoon pools during the emergency.

Bill Blake spoke of following in Brandy and Linda's shoes as a District Manager and as a former chair of the Puget Sound Caucus. He added information on the flooding in Skagit, and that it felt like "riparian buffer ground zero" is in the Skagit valley, how the district was studying what incentives would make riparian buffers more attractive for private landowners. He shared Skagit now has 12 staff, most recently launching a social media presence. He also spoke about rice trials in the Skagit delta as a response to brackish water, a new floodplain by designs grant, and Firewise programs in the area. He answered questions about the riparian conversation from the legislature in the Skagit area.

Treasurer's Report

Dave Fenn included the following as highlights for his Treasurer's Report:

- February plant sale orders reached \$1.494 million.
 - Expenses are up as the price of fuel, seed, chemicals, and repair costs have increased somewhat.
- As of February 28th, WACD had over \$800,000 in cash on hand.
- There's also almost \$1.4 million in the Edward Jones Investment account, with slight loses with the downturn in the market.
- WACD's accountant narrowed down the IRS tax payment issues to FY2017; we've cleared every other year with the IRS Taxpayer Advocate.

PMC Nursery Report

Jim Brown reported things were going good at the nursery. Revenue was up 30%, expenses were also up 17%. There were two concerns though – a need to streamline sales and processing to make things easier in the future, and the loss of work crews to their usual spring/summer jobs. Jim shared that harvest was slow, a few weeks behind and still not finished. Thankfully damp conditions extended dormancy. He reported a harvest of 1.8 million plants, 1.9 million plants were sold, with 1.25 million shipped. He answered questions about the state of the crew and the capacity to expand to meet future needs for riparian restoration plants.

Annual Work Plan Update

Tom Salzer presented an update to the Annual Work Plan with the Board, going over project goals and timeline for the remaining work. He answered questions about the connection to the 5-year strategic plan and how Board members could help this be a success.

Future Board Meetings

Mike Mumford asked the Board to consider if the switch to 12 meetings a year was getting more accomplished with more meetings. That started a conversation about the reason for the transition away from only doing quarterly meetings, how regular meetings are not easy to give up regardless of

effectiveness, and the concern about burning out staff and the volunteers who serve as Board members. Mike Mumford asked a follow-up question for later consideration about meeting in person before the scheduled June budget meeting in Bow.

Legislative Recap

Brynn Brady joined the meeting to present as WACD's Lobbyist on the legislative session just ended. Where legislative conversations started and ended on priorities like riparian buffers, CD elections, and the supplemental budget. She answered questions about the specifics to HB 1838 and her predictions for the 2023 session.

Ryan Baye discussed potential WACD priorities for the 2023 legislative session, identifying what would take up the most time during summer planning and activities and that the Board should prepare to weigh in at the April meeting. He answered questions about the potential connection between an interest in raising the cap on CD Rates and Charges with the question of district elections and how the new Sustainable Funding Committee might be able to see action in the next session.

Emails

Tom Salzer presented on the current predicament for CDs that relied on the Commission for email services, soon to be orphaned by their current email provider. He laid out multiple options available and briefed the board on his plan. He answered questions about different potential providers and how WACD could provide service to these districts without opening itself to public record liability or the perception that WACD could access district emails.

Agreeing to Disagree

Mike Mumford offered the opportunity to continue the conversation from last month's meeting. He wanted to say that WACD staff are usually operating at the direction of the Board or himself, and should be treated with respect. Noting that there seemed to be a lot of friction in the community, he asked folks to pick up the phone and call him if they were frustrated. No other comments were offered.

Announcements

- Doug Rushton and Ryan Baye announced details regarding the NACD Fly-In.
- Bill Blake announced WADE's conference would be in person this summer.
- Ryan Baye announced the Southwest Area Executive Committee would be selecting a new Area Director on Wednesday.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40.