

Approved May 21, 2020



Washington State Conservation Commission Meeting  
March 19, 2020

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The Conservation Commission held the regular business meeting via web/teleconference to protect the health and safety of its members, staff and public from the increasing concerns of the novel coronavirus COVID-19. Chairman Longrie called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

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**COMMISSIONERS ATTENDED VIA WEB/TELECONFERENCE**

Dean Longrie, Chairman and elected west region representative  
Harold Crose, Vice-chairman and elected central region representative  
Larry Cochran, elected eastern region representative  
Sarah Spaeth, Governor Appointee  
Daryl Williams, Governor Appointee  
David Giglio, Department of Ecology  
Jim Kropf, Washington State University  
Perry Beale, Department of Agriculture  
Julie Sackett, Department of Natural Resources  
Jeanette Dorner, Washington Association of Conservation Districts

**STAFF, PARTNERS AND GUESTS ATTENDED VIA WEB/TELECONFERENCE**

**SCC staff:** Carol Smith, Executive Director, Lori Gonzalez, Ron Shultz, Shana Joy, Sarah Groth, Alicia McClendon, Josh Giuntoli, Mike Baden, Jean Fike, Brian Cochrane, Levi Keesecker, Laura Johnson, Ashley Wood, Alison Halpern, Allisa Carlson, and Bill Eller. **Partners:** Mike Kuttel Jr., Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, Nick Peak, EPA, Sherre Copeland, US Forest Service, Tom Salzer, WACD Executive Director, Ryan Baye, WACD Legislative Member Coordinator, and Roylene Comes at Night, NRCS. **Guests:** Nichole Embertson, Nathaniel Lewis, Loren Meagher, Nick Norton, Zorah Oppenheimer, Eric Bartrand, Renee Hadley, Sarah Jones, Sarah Moorehead, Richard Ryon, and Michael Tobin.

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**CONSENT AGENDA**

***Motion by Commissioner Crose to approve the January 16, 2020 draft meeting minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Williams. Motion passed.***

**PRESENTATION**

The SCC welcomed Andrew Spaeth from the Department of Natural Resources to present on the [20-Year Forest Health Strategic Action Plan](#). Mr. Spaeth's presentation can also be found on the SCC [meetings web page](#).

## BUDGET

### *Fiscal Year 2020 Year End Funding Timeline*

Sarah Groth, fiscal manager presented to commissioners a proposed timeline and process of awarding conservation districts operating funding, if additional funding becomes available. The timeline allows districts more time to prepare funding requests for consideration and sufficient time for SCC finance and regional manager staff to review and vet those requests. Once the awards have been made, districts can immediately begin to purchase and/or complete projects needed by June 30.

***Motion by Commissioner Cochran to approve the Fiscal Year 2020 Year End Funding Timeline and process to award operating funding IF any funding becomes available ([as listed in meeting packet pages 11-12](#)). Seconded by Commissioner Spaeth. Motion passed.***

### *Biennium 2021-23 Budget Development Process*

Sarah Groth and Ron Shultz, presented a proposed 2021-2023 budget development process for the commissioner's consideration. Agency budget proposals are typically due to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) around the beginning of September. The proposed approach would continue to include conservation district involvement early on, as well outreach to state agencies and other stakeholder groups.

***Motion by Commissioner Crose to approve the 2021-23 state budget development process for the SCC and conservation districts. Seconded by Commissioner Cochran. Motion passed.***

## DISTRICT OPERATIONS

### *Mid-term Conservation District Supervisor Appointment*

The Conservation Commission received a conservation district supervisor application to fill a mid-term vacancy at the Cascadia Conservation District. Commissioner Crose, elected central area representative conducted an interview with the applicant, along with another commission member and regional manager for the district.

***Motion by Commissioner Crose to appoint Amy Bridges to the Cascadia Conservation District Board of Supervisors. Seconded by Commissioner Cochran. Motion passed.***

### *Pend Oreille Conservation District Petition*

The commission received a signed petition for inclusion from the Pend Oreille Conservation District and the City of Newport to include the City within the boundaries of the conservation district.

***Motion by Commissioner Cochran to approve the petition for inclusion of the City of Newport within the boundaries of the Pend Oreille Conservation District. Seconded by Commissioner Spaeth. Motion passed.***

## PRESENTATION

The SCC welcomed Dr. Nichole Embertson, leadership member of the [Center for Technical Development](#) and staff member from the Whatcom Conservation District. Dr. Embertson provided an in depth overview of CTD activities. You can also see the full presentation slides on the SCC [meetings web page](#).

## POLICY AND PROGRAMS

### *Revision to CD Elections Proposed Rule*

Bill Eller, elections officer provided members several options to consider as the commission continues to move forward with the revision to the conservation district elections rule and whether to include the one-week election language in the conservation district election Washington Administrative Code for publication. Full details are provided in the business [meeting packet pages 29-33](#).

***Motion by Commissioner Dorner to adopt Option 1: We keep the proposed WAC change for distribution and comment, but remove that provision after we've received comments. In this scenario we would provide comment as staff to the effect that given the legislative concern with this provision, we recommend it be removed. Seconded by Commissioner Beale. Motion passed.***

### *Move elections to one week*

***Motion by Commissioner Dorner to remove the language regarding restricting elections to one week that is included in the current proposed WAC. Seconded by Commissioner Crose. Motion passed.***

### *Conservation Easement Sub-Committee*

Josh Giuntoli, farmland preservation coordinator, informed the commission about the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) led by the Recreation and Conservation Office timeline of May 1 for approving projects forward. The timeline does not allow for the sub-committee to meet in a timely manner and present to the full commission by the timeline set by RCO. Staff are seeking approval to allow the sub-committee to meet and make a recommendation directly to the executive director, chair, and another member to make the determination on moving forward with projects.

***Motion by Commissioner Spaeth to authorize the executive director and chair of the commission, along with another member of the Conservation Easement Subcommittee, to receive referrals and authorize the Subcommittee to refer applications to the WWRP Farmland Preservation Program. Seconded by Commissioner Crose. Motion passed.***

## COMMISSION OPERATIONS

### *SCC Comprehensive Emergency Plan and Continuity of Operations Plan*

Bill Eller presented to members the SCC's updated Comprehensive Emergency Plan (CEMP) and the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). Changes are done yearly to update staff contact information and include additional plans as needed. Due to the current situation with COVID-19, staff updated to include pandemics to the plan.

***Motion by Commissioner Crose to approve the SCC's updated Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) and Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). Seconded by Commissioner Beale. Motion passed.***

Chairman Longrie adjourned the meeting at: 2:32 p.m.