Natural Resource Investments
Grant Program

Committee Report to Commissioners

Shana Joy,
District Ops & Regional Manager Coordinator
March 18, 2021
Natural Resource Investments (NRI) Background

• The NRI grant program has been around for several biennia at the SCC – formerly called “non-shellfish”

• Landowner by landowner cost-share projects structure
NRI Grant Basics

- NRI is capital funds appropriated by the legislature
- Granted out to CDs statewide on a project by project basis
- Each ready to go project reviewed by SCC staff prior to funding awards
- Each CD may receive funding for 2 projects per biennium
- SCC cost share contract required for each project – generated by CPDS
- All funds are on a reimbursement basis only – landowner expends funds first
- Rely upon NRCS and SCC-approved practice standards and specifications
It’s time for NRI grants to evolve to better meet today’s conservation project needs.
NRI Committee
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harold Crose</td>
<td>WSCC</td>
<td>Commissioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joe Holtrop</td>
<td>Clallam CD</td>
<td>Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elsa Bowen</td>
<td>Lincoln Co. CD</td>
<td>Manager</td>
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<td>Megan Stewart</td>
<td>Asotin Co. CD</td>
<td>Manager</td>
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<td>Amy Martin</td>
<td>Okanogan CD</td>
<td>Conservation Director</td>
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<td>Al Cairns</td>
<td>Jefferson Co. CD</td>
<td>Manager (former)</td>
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<td>Zorah Oppenheimer</td>
<td>Clark CD</td>
<td>Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tova Tillinghast</td>
<td>Underwood CD</td>
<td>Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heather Wendt</td>
<td>Benton &amp; Franklin CDs</td>
<td>Assistant Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evan Bauder</td>
<td>Mason CD</td>
<td>Habitat Program Manager</td>
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<td>Courtney Woods</td>
<td>WSCC</td>
<td>Grants Manager</td>
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<td>Melissa Vander Linden</td>
<td>WSCC</td>
<td>Program Specialist</td>
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<td>Josh Giuntoli</td>
<td>WSCC</td>
<td>Regional Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shana Joy</td>
<td>WSCC</td>
<td>Regional Manager Coordinator</td>
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<td>Allisa Carlson</td>
<td>WSCC</td>
<td>Regional Manager</td>
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<td>Mike Baden</td>
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<td>Jean Fike</td>
<td>WSCC</td>
<td>Regional Manager</td>
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Challenges

- Changing local priorities
- Larger watershed or community scale projects
- Contractors
- Technical assistance
- Cost share contract
An Example of Challenges
Another Example of Challenges
The Committee’s Proposed Changes to NRI
Proposed Changes

- New funding awards structure
- Increased local flexibility for changing priorities
- Technical Assistance
- District Implemented Project (DIP)
District Implemented Project

• CD responsible directly for all aspects of project construction: permitting, bidding and contracting, contractor management, maintenance and monitoring where appropriate.

• Not a cost-share structure, no landowner reimbursement by the CD. CD makes expenditures directly.

• New landowner agreement template optional for CD use. CD must complete, and provide to SCC, an agreement with the landowner(s) for each DIP completed but structure of agreement is flexible to best fit the needs of the project.
District Implemented Project - Sample

• Community wildfire resiliency project: chipping material, thinning trees, or pruning throughout a neighborhood
  – Numerous landowners participating
  – Breaking up cost of contractor work by individual landowner is unrealistic
  – Landowner obligation for ongoing maintenance once work completed is minimal
  – Need to work with all landowners in the area – not just those who economic means for cost-share
What Wouldn’t Change
NRI Program Oversight
Questions?
Requested Action
Options for Action

• The Commission directs staff to publish the draft NRI programmatic guidelines and landowner agreement template for at least a 30 day review and comment period by conservation districts with the intent that further action will be considered at the May 2021 Commission meeting.

• The Commission determines that the draft NRI programmatic guidelines and landowner agreement template are not ready for review and comment by conservation districts and directs staff to continue working with the NRI Committee.
Thank you!

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