Purpose

• Update Commissioners on recent Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) related activities within the agency

• Information only item
Background

• Public entity with duty to ensure conservation practices, projects, and programs are available in all areas of the state for the benefit of all people.

• Responsibility to provide equitable and inclusive services that meet the needs of Washingtonians, our natural resources, and our working lands.
Recent Activities

• Formed DEI Working Group in November 2020

• DEI presentations at recurring staff meetings

• Researched available resources

• Gathered feedback from staff to assess perspectives, needs, and desires related to DEI
DEI Working Group

- Purpose: To explore how the Conservation Commission can equitably and inclusively fulfill our mission and statutory duties; advance DEI through our policies, programs, and procedures; and support personal and professional DEI learning opportunities for staff.
- Meets monthly
- Participation is voluntary
- Cross-functional staff representation
Approach

Informed by lessons learned from our partners, the following understanding guides our DEI Working Group:

• None of us are experts on DEI.
• Additional resources will be necessary to identify and articulate our approach and actions.
• This is a journey with learning along the way, it is not a destination.
• The journey is a marathon; not a sprint.
• Mistakes will be made and that’s ok.
Staff Feedback

Conversations and opportunities for learning that are:
- Respectful
- Welcoming
- Transparent

We want to:
- **Focus on what unites us**
- Allow for a diversity of perspectives
- Meet people where they are
- Use data
- Use simple language
- Show how DEI relates to conservation and agriculture
- Listen and respond to the needs of conservation districts
- Provide voluntary resources to support conservation districts

We do not want to:
- Point fingers
- Place blame

Staff would like additional training and resources.
Next Step: Develop Work Plan

Work plan activities to include:

• Create a working group charter which will include member terms to allow additional staff to participate on a voluntary basis

• Identify training resources and method for sharing across the agency

• Create DEI definitions with a conservation and agricultural lens

• Identify funding needs to support:
  • Agency resources (e.g. tailored trainings, equity audit, translation services)
  • District resources (e.g. small grant program to support DEI resources, translation services)

• Identify how to coordinate with the newly formed Office of Equity
Thank you!