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## Regular Business Meeting

The Washington State Conservation Commission (Commission/SCC) met virtually on March 18, 2021. Chairman Longrie called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

### COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

**Dean Longrie**, *Chairman and elected west region rep.*  
**Harold Crose**, *Vice-chairman and elected central region rep.*  
**Perry Beale**, *Department of Agriculture*  
**Larry Cochran**, *elected eastern region rep.*  
**Jeanette Dorner**, *Washington Association of Conservation Districts*  
**Jim Kropf**, *Washington State University*  
**Ben Rau**, *Department of Ecology*  
**Terra Rentz**, *Department of Natural Resources*  
**Sarah Spaeth**, *Governor Appointee*  
**Daryl Williams**, *Governor Appointee*

### COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT

**Carol Smith**, *Executive Director*  
**Mike Baden**, *Northeast Regional Manager*  
**Allisa Carlson**, *South Central Regional Manager*  
**Brian Cochrane**, *Habitat & Monitoring Coordinator*  
**Stephanie Crouch**, *Administrative Assistant*  
**Kate Delavan**, *Office of Farmland Preservation Coordinator*  
**Bill Eller**, *Elections Officer and VSP Coordinator*  
**Lori Gonzalez**, *Executive Assistant*  
**Josh Giuntoli**, *Southwest Regional Manager*  
**Sarah Groth**, *Fiscal Manager*  
**Alison Halpern**, *Policy Assistant*  
**Karla Heinitz**, *Contracts Manager*  
**Laura Meyer**, *Communications Coordinator*  
**Shana Joy**, *District Operations Manager*  
**Levi Keesecker**, *Natural Resources Scientist*  
**Ron Shultz**, *Policy Director*  
**Ashley Wood**, *Fiscal Analyst*

### PARTNERS REPRESENTED

**Ryan Baye**, *Washington Association of Conservation Districts*  
**Sherre Copeland**, *US Forest Service*  
**Michael Kuttel, Jr.**, *Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife*  
**Doug Rushton**, *National Association of Conservation Districts*  
**Tom Salzer**, *Washington Association of Conservation Districts*

### GUESTS ATTENDED

Please see "[Attachment A](#)" for full list of attendees.

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## Consent Agenda (Action)

*Draft March 18, 2021 meeting minutes*

**Motion by Commissioner Cochran to approve the March 18, 2021 meeting minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Williams. Motion carries.**

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## Budget and Finance (Action)

*2021-2023 Proposed Budget*

Chairman Longrie invites Sarah Groth, SCC Fiscal Manager, to begin presenting on the first agenda item. Ms. Groth begins by explaining that the state legislature has passed an operating budget, a re-appropriation capital budget and a new capital budget. SCC staff seek approval to allocate funds to districts. The funding allocation request is as follows:

- 1. SCC Administration** The operating budget passed by the legislature allows for administration funding to continue at the same levels as the 2019-21 biennium.
- 2. Implementation Allocation:** SCC recommends funding for Implementation in accordance with the Updated Implementation Grant Allocation (approved at March 21, 2019 SCC regular business meeting) at \$5,302,000 per fiscal year, an increase of approximately \$1,000,000 per fiscal year due to increased CTA funding received in the 2021-2023 operating budget.
- 3. Engineering Allocation:** Professional Engineering grant remain at the same level as fiscal year 2021 at \$675,000 per fiscal year.
- 4. Irrigation Efficiencies:** Appropriation is provided solely for technical assistance and grants to conservation districts for the purpose of implementing water conservation measures and irrigation efficiencies.
- 5. CREP:** The capital budget passed by the legislature included \$4,000,000 for CREP. This included proviso language for \$2,000,000 for project development and project management /TA, \$250,000 for targeted riparian buffer incentive project (Mount Vernon) as well as reappropriation for unspent 2019-2021 Cost Share and TA funds.
- 6. Task Orders** The operating budget allows SCC to continue funding NRCS task orders at a level slightly higher to fiscal year 2021 funding not to exceed \$225,000 per fiscal year. SCC staff are working with districts and NRCS to prepare task orders to allow districts to begin work July 1, 2021.
- 7. Livestock TA** Livestock TA has been funded from the capital budget for Shellfish and NRI projects in the past. The Legislature reappropriated unspent 2019-2021 Shellfish and NRI projects, and \$4,000,000 in new NRI and \$3,500,000 in new funding for Shellfish. In addition, the legislature appropriated \$1,110,000 million of the State Toxics Control Account which can also be used for Livestock TA projects.
- 8. Shellfish** The Legislature reappropriated unspent 2019-2021 Shellfish and \$3,500,000 in new funding for Shellfish. SCC staff request approval to award funding in accordance with commission approved programmatic guidelines for Shellfish and any cultural resource work required per Executive Order 21-02.
- 9. Natural Resource Investments** The Legislature reappropriated unspent 2019-2021 NRI and \$4,000,000 in new funding for NRI. SCC staff request approval to award funding in accordance with commission approved programmatic guidelines and any cultural resource work required per Executive Order 21-02.
- 10. Wildfire Recovery Funding** “One-time funding is provided for conservation district technical assistance, project cultural resources review, engineering, and cost-share grants to landowners for recovery from wildfire damage.”

Ms. Groth explains that procedures outlining the allocation of this funding are currently in development and that SCC hopes to begin immediately on July 1, 2021. This is a short timeline that

is necessitated by the fact that the funding was placed in the operating budget - \$1.5 million each of the next two fiscal years. Projects started in the coming fiscal year must be completed by June 30, 2022.

In order to maximize flexibility to respond to wildfire recovery needs, SCC anticipates a rolling-allocation system similar to the methods utilized in the FY's 16-17 when there was last dedicated funding, with a regular review and award of submitted cost-share projects and other recovery funding needs on a set and predictable timing interval. SCC will consult with key conservation districts that were affected by large fires in 2020, or participated in the prior wildfire funding allocation process as the procedures are finalized.

***Motion by Commissioner Crose to approve the funding proposal proposed below with specific award amounts for the following grant programs in the attached table (meeting packet page 55). Seconded by Commissioner Beale. Motion carries.***

#### *2021-2023 Grant & Contract Procedure Manual update*

Ms. Groth continues presenting on the next agenda item with Shana Joy. Ms. Joy and Ms. Groth explain that at the January 2021 meeting commission members gave their approval for SCC staff to send the draft manual out to conservation districts for the 45-day comment period. SCC staff are reporting the comments received and are requesting approval of the proposed changes. Ms. Groth included a summary of changes and comments received for consideration, which can be found on meeting packet **page 57**.

***Motion by Commissioner Spaeth to approve the proposed changes to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual for use by districts, effective July 1, 2021. Seconded by Commissioner Crose. Motion carries.***

#### *2022 Potential Supplemental Budget Packages*

Ms. Groth continues presenting on the next agenda item concerning 2022 Supplemental Budget Topics, explaining that Commission staff, working with WACD, conservation districts, and agency partners, will continue to develop these concepts (as approved by the Commission) into the required format with additional detail. They will be presented to the Commission at a subsequent meeting for final approval to submit to OFM by the deadline.

SCC is currently exploring topics which funding received did not meet the level of funding needed. The topics listed below are under the categories of Capital and Operating budgets.

#### ***Capital***

##### ***FarmPAI***

At the January 2021 Conservation Commission meeting, the Commission passed a motion supporting the development of the Farmland Protection and Affordability Investment (FarmPAI) program. FarmPAI fills a critical gap in the available tools for farmland protection by providing access to low-interest loans for fee simple land acquisition when high-priority agricultural land faces imminent risk of development. The program would help facilitate land access to underrepresented producers including young and beginning farmers, people of color, and veterans. If approved, the loan funding would be made available by the State Housing Finance Commission. However, FarmPAI's success

requires ready sources of conservation easement funding to permanently protect the land and make it affordable for the next generation farmer.

## **Operating**

### *Conservation Equity and Engagement*

1. **Secure a contract for an equity assessment of the SCC, including programs and services, to identify opportunities.**
2. **Support conservation districts seeking more capacity to reach communities who are under-resourced.**

If these needs aren't funded, some areas and communities of the state may experience barriers that impede full participation in and availability to SCC's voluntary conservation work and its benefits. For example, 12.9 percent of people in Washington (942K) live with some form of disability, including impairments to vision, hearing, and/or mobility; around 10 percent (735,000) lack internet connection in their homes; 10.3 percent (751K) live below the poverty line; 8.9 percent (649K) are veterans; and nearly 20 percent (1.5M) speak a non-English language. Washington also is home to 29 federally recognized tribes who are a key partner in natural resource conservation.

### *Sustainable Farms and Fields*

The bill for the Sustainable Farms and Fields program passed last year with strong bipartisan support and overwhelming enthusiasm and interest by both the agricultural and environmental communities. Unfortunately, the COVID outbreak and the economic uncertainty that followed meant that funding was not requested for this upcoming biennium. SCC has been working with our climate/agricultural advocacy partners, WACD/NACD, and NRCS to explore federal funding opportunities and private-public partnerships to jumpstart SFF, and they would also like to submit a supplemental budget request as potential funding source. Climate change mitigation is a top priority at the federal and state level, and farmers are eagerly waiting for the program to begin so they can implement climate-smart practices as quickly as possible.

***Motion by Commissioner Spaeth to approve supplemental budget topics for further development by SCC staff for possible submittal for the 2021 supplemental budget. Seconded by Commissioner Cochran. Motion carries.***

### *Review of WACD and SCC Agreement*

Ms. Groth presents on the final agenda item under "Budget." She shares that each year the SCC requests approval to enter into a contract with WACD for contract work on tasks identified by SCC Executive Director and SCC leadership. SCC is asking for approval to enter into a contract with WACD for contract work on tasks identified by SCC Executive Director and SCC leadership.

***Motion by Commissioner Cochran to approve the request for SCC Executive Director Carol Smith to work with WACD Executive Director Tom Salzer to develop and enter into a contract up to \$65,000 per fiscal year. The tasks would include support for the annual meeting in December, preparation for fly-in meeting in concert with NACD and supervisor development and other smaller tasks as identified. Seconded by Commissioner Crose. Motion carries.***

## *Sustainable Farms and Fields*

Chairman Longrie invites Alison Halpern, SCC Scientific Policy Advisor, to present on the agenda item. Ms. Halpern shares that the programmatic guidelines are in progress, and that drafts are being written, which will need to be shared with conservation districts for review as soon as they are ready.

***Motion by Commissioner Beale to authorize Executive Director Carol Smith to approve the distribution of the Sustainable Farms and Fields and Shellfish Grant programmatic guidelines drafts to conservation districts for a 45-day review and comment period when they are ready to be shared. Seconded by Commissioner Spaeth. Motion carries.***

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## *District Operations (Action)*

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### *Conservation District Appointed Supervisor Applications*

During the current appointment cycle, the State Conservation Commission (SCC) received a total of 49 appointed conservation district supervisor applications to fill full-term positions across the state, including one mid-term position. All applications for these appointments were due into the Commission by March 31, 2021.

Of the 49 applications that were received, staff identified 21 applications from eight conservation districts needing a more comprehensive review. The review consists of interviewing individual candidates for situations where there is a competition for an appointed position as well as when there is one candidate that is new to serving as a supervisor. For situations where there is only the incumbent applying for re-appointment, the incumbent will remain in their position.

This year, 21 individual interviews were conducted with the area commission member, another available commission member, and one regional manager. A revised list of interview questions was also developed for consistency.

### *West Region Conservation District Appointments*

***Motion by Commissioner Longrie to appoint all the non-contested west region conservation district applicants to their respective board of supervisors (Clallam CD, Bennett Smith, Grays Harbor, Elizabeth Zaborac, Jefferson County, Janet Aubin, San Juan Islands, Vicki Heater, Snohomish CD, Marni Swart, and Whidbey Island CD, David Edwards). Seconded by Commissioner Cochran. Motion carries.***

### *Kitsap Conservation District*

***Motion by Commissioner Longrie to appoint Roderick Camarce to the Kitsap Conservation District Board of Supervisors. Seconded by Commissioner Crose. Motion carries.***

### *Lewis Conservation District*

***Motion by Commissioner Longrie to appoint David Fenn to the Lewis Conservation District Board of Supervisors. Seconded by Commissioner Crose. Motion carries.***

*Pierce Conservation District*

**Motion by Commissioner Longrie to appoint Amy Moreno-Sills to the Pierce Conservation District Board of Supervisors. Seconded by Commissioner Crose. Motion carries.**

*Thurston Conservation District*

**Motion by Commissioner Longrie to appoint Doug Rushton to the Thurston Conservation District Board of Supervisors. Seconded by Commissioner Crose. Motion carries.**

*Whatcom Conservation District*

**Motion by Commissioner Longrie to appoint Fred Berman to the Whatcom Conservation District Board of Supervisors. Seconded by Commissioner Crose. Motion carries.**

*Central Region Conservation District Appointments*

**Commissioner Crose moves to appoint all non-contested applicants for the central region to their respective boards (Adams CD, Gary Cook; Benton CD, Jack Clark; Cascadia CD, Amy Bridges; Central Klickitat CD Stephen Cunningham; Eastern Klickitat CD Peter Mercer; Foster Creek CD, John McLean; Franklin CD Brad Bailie; North Yakima CD, Gail Thornton; South Douglas CD, Joe Sprauer; South Yakima, Ky Shinn; and Underwood CD, Barbara Bailey). Seconded by Commissioner Williams. Motion carries.**

*Cascadia Conservation District*

**Motion by Commissioner Crose to appoint Kurt Hosman to the Cascadia Conservation District Board of Supervisors. Seconded by Commissioner Rentz. Motion carries.**

*Clark Conservation District*

**Motion by Commissioner Crose to appoint Dean Longrie to the Clark Conservation District Board of Supervisors. Seconded by Commissioner Rentz. Chairman Longrie recuses himself. Motion carries.**

*Eastern Region Conservation District Appointments*

**Motion by Commissioner Cochran to appoint all the non-contested applicants for the eastern region to their respective conservation district board of supervisors (Asotin CD, Jason Schlee; Columbia CD, Cody Chapman; Ferry CD, James Rochelle; Lincoln CD, Jeff Schibel; Palouse CD, Chris Heitstuman; Rock Lake CD, David Johnson; Pend Oreille CD, Randall Leestma; Pomeroy CD, Michael Hastings; Steven County CD, Tom McKern; Whitman CD, Bryan Jones). Seconded by Commissioner Crose. Motion carries.**

*King Conservation District*

**Motion by Commissioner Cochran to appoint William (Bill) Knutsen to the King Conservation District Board of Supervisors. Seconded by Commissioner Crose. Motion carries.**

*Walla Walla County Conservation District*

**Motion by Commissioner Cochran to appoint Annie Byerley to the Walla Walla County Conservation District Board of Supervisors. Seconded by Commissioner Beale. Motion carries.**

## *2021 Conservation District Elections*

Chairman Longrie invites Bill Eller, SCC VSP Coordinator, to present on the next agenda item concerning Conservation District Elections. Mr. Eller shares that none of the 43 districts had any issues of significant noncompliance with WAC Title 135-110 and the election procedures published for this cycle that rose to the level warranting non-certification of the election.

District staff responsible for elections did a great job in solving most issues related to election rules and policy compliance; adjusting to the changes to the election WAC that the Commission made in September 2020, and dealing with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Virtually all the issues that did arise were resolved before they became irreversible or otherwise affected the election process.

Compliance with election rules and policies seems to have held steady this year, but the increasing politicization of the conservation district election process, use of technology (internet ballot requests) and more active campaigning by candidates continues to put pressure on our election system. While providing election forms and most other materials electronically has created some efficiencies, processing and interpreting the election data and conducting election investigations continues to take substantial Commission staff time and resources.

***Motion by Commissioner Cochran to certify and announce the official winners of 43 of 45 conservation district elections, as listed in the table titled: Conservation District Election Results (Meeting packet pages 70-71). Seconded by Commissioner Crose. Motion carries.***

## *Conservation District Election Guide – changes after COVID*

Chairman Longrie invites Bill Eller to continue presenting on the next agenda item concerning the Conservation District Election Guide. Mr. Eller explains that Commission staff are proposing two changes (amended sample notices and sample election resolutions) to the Conservation District (CD) Election and Appointment Guide (*Guide*) to assist CDs in their elections. Both changes came about as a result the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff propose the changes be made available to CDs as per the Commission's "*Policy on Policies.*" Staff would prepare a summary of the comments and present those and the final draft of the *Guide* for adoption at the next regularly scheduled Commission meeting.

***Motion by Commissioner Crose to make the draft, updated Guide updates available to the CDs for comment, as per the Commission's "Policy on Policies." Seconded by Commissioner Cochran. Motion carries.***

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## Commission Operations (*Action*)

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### *2022-27 Strategic Plan Development – Proposed Goals*

Chairman Longrie welcomes Laura Meyer, SCC Communications Manager, to present on the next agenda item surrounding the 2022-27 SCC Strategic Plan. Ms. Meyer presents the goals that were



amended during the May 19, 2021 work session the previous day. These goals fall under the following strategic priorities:

- *Voluntary Conservation of Natural Resources*
- *Agricultural and Working Lands Viability and Food System Support*
- *Governance and Accountability*
- *Climate Resiliency*
- *Leadership, Partnership, and Collaboration*

***Motion by Commissioner Crose to approve the SCC 2022-2027 strategic plan goals as revised in the notes from the May 19, 2021 Conservation Commission Strategic Planning Work Session, with the exception of those goals that are flagged for staff to revise and bring back for Commission approval at their business meeting in July 2021. Seconded by Commissioner Rentz. Motion carries.***

#### *Natural Resource Investments Programmatic Guidelines*

Chairman Longrie invites Shana Joy to present on the Natural Resource Investments Programmatic Guidelines. Ms. Joy shares that at the March 18, 2021 Commission meeting, draft programmatic guidelines were approved for distribution to all conservation districts for review and comment. This comment period closed on April 23, 2021, with an informational webinar held on April 7, 2021. The webinar was attended by 18 people from 19 conservation districts. Twelve formal comments were received by the close of the comment period. The NRI Committee met to review the comments and questions that were received on April 29, 2021. The NRI grant program administration and performance will be monitored through the 21-23 biennium and adaptively managed, with any necessary updates made prior to the start of each new biennium moving forward.

***Motion by Commissioner Cochran to adopt the Natural Resource Investments programmatic guidelines and landowner agreement template as presented for implementation beginning July 1, 2021. Seconded by Commissioner Crose. Motion carries.***

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## Presentation: Forest Health and Wildfire Resiliency Showcase

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Chairman Longrie invites Shana Joy to introduce conservation district representatives who will present on the fire resiliency showcase. These representatives are Kai Hoffman-Krull (San Juan CD), Anna Lael (Kittitas County CD), and Lacey Ausman-Ditto (Asotin CD).

Mr. Hoffman-Krull begins the presentation by presenting on Biochar and the Forest Carbon Cycle. Biochar has been a historic process of sequestering carbon. 30% of annual carbon emissions are captured by global net forest growth, and Pacific Coast forests absorb the highest rate of carbon in the US, and CA fires of 2020 released an estimated 90 million metric tons of carbon dioxide, 30 million more than the total carbon dioxide emissions from providing power to the state. Within San Juan County, they are looking at an issue that is happening all over the state. Essentially, forests are choking each other out because of how crowded they are. On top of this, drought conditions are exacerbating issues, and 85,000 acres of forest needing restoration. Pile burning is a method used to get rid of commercial logging, and it sterilize soil, create invasive weed habitat, and off gasses all stored carbon. Biochar is a charcoal that is produced in the absence of oxygen, and can endure in soil for thousands of years.



Ms. Lael begins presenting on the Kittitas Fire Adapted Communities Coalition (KFACC). Kittitas County is 1.4 million acres, and more than 70% of that is public land. Most of the large fires that have occurred in the last 21 years have occurred on public land. The Taylor Bridge fire occurred on almost all private land. Since 2009, Kittitas County CD has been working to be a part of FireWise. The Taylor Bridge Fire happened in 2012, and KCCD hit the ground running. In May 2017, they called in Mr. Ledgerwood, bringing in as many partners to these meetings as possible. These partners included Fire Departments, DNR, USFS, and more. They crafted their mission statement, which reads “A coordinated movement to increase community resiliency to wildfire by providing education, planning, and technical assistance for implementing activities with the people that live, work, and recreate in Kittitas County.” KFACC has met regularly every month since May 2017, coordinated outreach efforts, prescribed fire in the Wildland Urban Interface, implemented 200+ acres of private landowner cross boundary treatment, regularly reviewed county policies and provided feedback, and did a major update of the county wildfire protection plan in 2018. Outreach includes videos available to the public, capitalizing on the attention received after Jolly Mountain Fire. They created the KFACC Landowner Portal where landowners can access the videos, as well as learning how to prepare for wildfire, providing resources, and more.

Ms. Ausman-Ditto begins presenting by giving a brief overview of Asotin County, located in the extreme southeast of Washington State. The county is heavily wooded, and is designated as extreme fire risk. DNR has defined this area as one of their priorities landscapes in forest health management in their plan recently submitted. Recently, ACD has been focusing on salmon habitat. It helped identify areas that could use some help, and helped prioritize where to add fish habitat. Because of the complex landscape, there is extreme risk of wildfire in uplands. There are overstocked stands, pathogen mortality, and fire adapted ecosystem, and there is degraded steelhead habitat in lowlands. Asotin CD came up with an idea – Forest Fuels for In-Stream Habitat (FFISH). They are working to connect ecosystems, watersheds, and people. They offer technical assistance, top-down watershed restoration, forestry education, land manager empowerment, partnerships, and materials for LTPBR habitat projects.

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## Policy & Programs (*Information*)

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The 2021 Legislative Session was a long, 105-day session with the primary focus being passage of budget bills for the operating, capital, and transportation budgets for the 2021-23 biennium. Due to the COVID pandemic, meetings and committee hearings were conducted remotely. Although things seemed to function smoothly, one result of the new methods of remote communication was it slowed the legislative process. As a result, many bills didn't pass simply because the legislature ran out of time.

Despite these challenges, the Legislature was able to accomplish a great deal of work. They passed the 2021-23 operating and capital budgets. The transportation budget remains to be passed and a special session may be needed. In policy, the legislature passed significant bills relating to a capital gains tax, the Climate Commitment Act creating a “cap and invest” program, policing reform, and environmental equity and justice legislation.

### **2021-23 Operating and Capital Budgets**

The primary task of the 2021 Session is the passage of the 2021-23 operating and capital budgets. They were able to accomplish this task without resorting to a special session.

In April 2020, due to the COVID pandemic and the closure of business activity, the estimates of a revenue shortfall for the state were as high as \$8 billion dollars for the three-year period from FY 20 through FY 23. Fortunately, Washington's gig economy is more resilient than most states as much of the economic activity in the area of software and tech work can be done remotely. Over time, revenue projections continued to improve.

Finally, in March 2021 the State Revenue Forecast Council projected revenues for the 2021-23 biennium at 8.2% over projects. That said, there was still enough of a shortfall for the last fiscal year of the current 2019-21 biennium that the legislature did take the proposed 15% reductions from state agencies.

### **2021-23 Operating Budget and Capital Budget**

Commission members have previously seen the comparison tables prepared by SCC staff regarding the 2021-23 operating budget. This information is provided as a high level overview. The Commission's 2021-23 capital budget isn't all that SCC had hoped for. Funding for the CREP program is lower than requested and will create some challenges in implementing the program. Shellfish funding was also reduced, as was funding for the Irrigation Efficiencies program. A bright spot was support for the RCPP programs across the state.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Work Plan**

SCC staff met informally to discuss DEI over the summer of 2020, made time available during our weekly staff meetings for DEI discussions, and formed a DEI Working Group (Working Group) in November 2020. The purpose of the Working Group is 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. Staff volunteered to participate and the Working Group includes cross-functional representation.

In winter/spring of 2021, the Working Group gathered feedback from staff to assess perspectives, needs, and desires related to DEI. Through this process the Working Group learned:

- Staff would like to facilitate and participate in conversations and opportunities for learning that are respectful, welcoming, and transparent.
- Staff 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
- Staff do not want to:
  - Point fingers
  - Place blame
- Staff have varying exposure to formal and informal training. Staff requested additional DEI trainings and resources.

The next step for the Working Group is to develop a DEI work plan. Work plan activities will likely include:

- Creation of a Working Group charter that will include member terms to allow additional staff to participate on a voluntary basis
- Identification of training resources and the method for sharing across the agency
- Creation of DEI definitions with a conservation and agricultural lens
- Identification of funding needs to support:
  - Agency resources (e.g. tailored training, DEI audit/assessment, translation services)
  - District resources (e.g. small grant program to support DEI resources, translations services)
- Identification of how to align and coordinate with the newly formed Office of Equity

### *Agricultural Conservation Easements Update*

Chairman Longrie invites Kate Delavan to continue sharing on the next agenda item. Ms. Delavan shares that the Conservation Commission closed on the Schuster Ranch agricultural conservation easement in Klickitat County in April 2021. The agricultural conservation easement permanently protects approximately 2,000 acres used for beef cattle and dryland crops. The conservation easement ensures this property will remain open and available for agriculture now and into the future while keeping the land in private ownership.

With the completion of the Schuster transaction, the Conservation Commission now holds a real property interest in three conservation properties. There are four additional easement projects in the pipeline. Staff are working to align resources and develop new procedures to support the growing easement portfolio.

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## *District Operations (Information)*

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### *Regional Manager Report*

Chairman Longrie invites Allisa Carlson to present the Regional Manager Report. Ms. Carlson shares that the regional managers have been giving ongoing support to conservation districts throughout the state, including but not limited to:

- *Partnering and relationships assistance*
- *CAPP Assistance*
- *New Supervisor and staff orientations and professional development*
- *Tracking grant spending and vouchering*
- *Open government training*
- *Cultural Resources*
- *Long range and annual planning assistance*
- *Records retention and PRA*
- *OPMA & Executive Sessions.*

Regional managers have also continued to provide support through COVID-19.

### *CAPP Preliminary Report*

Chairman Longrie invites Shana Joy to present the CAPP Preliminary Report. Ms. Joy shares that the Conservation Commissioners, at the January 2021 meeting, approved the CAPP system with eight Standards including Accountability Standard 1 with requirements for use in 2021. The 15

Accountability Requirements (Standard 1) are based in law (RCW) and administrative code (WAC) for conservation districts. Completing 100% of these items is a threshold for receiving state funding through the Conservation Commission. The attached initial annual status report is submitted to the Conservation Commission for their information at this time. A final CAPP status report will be provided in July 2021.

### *Governance Sub-Committee Report*

Shana Joy continues presenting on the Governance Sub-Committee Report. Ms. Joy begins by sharing the committee roster, and their meeting schedule. The first bit of work being performed surrounds Governance Culture and Commissioner Expectations. The next two items to work on are decision making and Commission meetings. Those will be worked on at a later date. They are currently working on drafting policy language around board purpose, governing commitments, board job descriptions, board officers, committees, and advisors to the board. Another part of the current work is surrounding Commissioner expectations, including Attendance and engagement, code of conduct, communication and representation, representing the Commission, ethics and conflicts of interest, and addressing violations.

The current timeline hopes to continue working on drafts, including an all staff review and an AAG review as needed. Currently planning to bring full drafts of all three sections for initial review at the July 15, 2021 Commission meeting. They hope to request adoption of final drafts at the September 16, 2021 meeting.

### *Cultural Resources Policy Update*

Chairman Longrie invites Jean Fike, SCC Puget Sound Regional Manager, to present on the next agenda item. Ms. Fike shares that on April 7, 2021 Governor Inslee issued Executive Order 21-02 (attached) to replace Executive Order 05-05 pertaining to archaeological and cultural resources. SCC staff are actively reviewing the new EO and corresponding with the WA Department of Archaeological and Historical Preservation for further guidance and clarifications on the new language and practical application of the new EO. An updated policy and related procedures is planned to be presented at the July 15, 2021 meeting.

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## *Commission Operations (Information)*

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Chairman Longrie adjourns the meeting at 3:01 p.m.