
Regular Business Meeting

The Washington State Conservation Commission (Commission/SCC) met virtually on July 15, 2021. Chairman Longrie called the meeting to order at 8:33 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*
David Giglio, *Department of Ecology*
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*
Lori Gonzalez, *Executive Assistant*
Josh Giuntoli, *Southwest Regional Manager*
Sarah Groth, *Fiscal Manager*
Alison Halpern, *Policy Assistant*
Laura Meyer, *Communications Coordinator*
Shana Joy, *District Operations Manager*
Levi Keesecker, *Natural Resources Scientist*
Ron Shultz, *Policy Director*

PARTNERS REPRESENTED

Ryan Baye, *WA Association of Conservation Districts*
Roylene Comes At Night, *USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service*
Sherre Copeland, *US Forest Service*
Michael Kuttel, Jr., *WA State Department of Fish and Wildlife*
Angela Reseland, *WA State Department of Fish and Wildlife*
Doug Rushton, *National Association of Conservation Districts*
Tom Salzer, *WA Association of Conservation Districts*

GUESTS ATTENDED

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

Consent Agenda (*Action*)

Draft May 20, 2021 meeting minutes

Motion by Commissioner Cochran to approve the May 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Crose. Motion carries.

Budget and Finance (*Action*)

2022 Supplemental Budget Requests

Chairman Longrie welcomes Sarah Groth, SCC Fiscal Manager to share the next agenda item. Ms. Groth explains that the SCC is requesting approval for three 2022 supplemental budget packages. Supplemental budget package requests are for new or additional funds in the existing biennium, funding should be for items that are extraordinary or unexpected. These packages are listed below:

Operating:

Conservation Equity and Engagement - not to exceed \$500,000

1. **Secure a contract for an equity assessment of the SCC, including programs and services, to identify opportunities.** This will enable the SCC to better assess and deliver their statutory duty to meet the “pressing need for the conservation of renewable resources in all areas of the state, whether urban, suburban, or rural” and ensure that “the benefits of resource practices, programs, and projects, as carried out by the state conservation commission and by the conservation districts, should be available to all such areas.” The assessment will help us identify and overcome potential unintended barriers that impact our ability to fulfill this duty.

Based on assessment results, the contractor also would work with staff to identify potential actions to include/prioritize as we implement our 2022-2027 long-range strategic plan (currently under development).

Estimated cost: \$50,000-\$75,000

2. **Support conservation districts seeking more capacity to reach communities who are under-resourced.** CDs would be eligible to submit proposals to a new small grant program to fund efforts including, but not limited to: translating materials into other languages and/or for the visually or hearing-impaired; building relationships with under-resourced communities; improving web/electronic accessibility; providing access to DEI trainings (e.g. state required foundational trainings); taking cultural competency trainings (e.g., Veterans Cultural Competency Training, Government-to-Government/State-Tribal Relations); or partnership-building/outreach (e.g., efforts to engage/serve beginning and underrepresented farmers).

This mini grant program supports several aspects of our developing 2022-2027 Strategic Plan, including our work to build conservation district capacity and assist them in complying with legal requirements, such as those related to web and IT accessibility.

Estimated cost: \$350,000-\$425,000

The total estimated request for this package is not to exceed \$500,000.

Sustainable Farms and Fields - not to exceed \$2,000,000

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 SCC did not request funding for the FY21-23 biennium. The SCC has been working with their climate/agricultural advocacy partners, the Governor’s Office, WACD/NACD, and NRCS to explore federal funding opportunities through USDA and the proposed American Jobs Plan. They are also exploring potential private-public partnerships to jumpstart SFF. With climate mitigation a top priority at the state and federal levels, the SCC is seeking a modest amount of state funding for FY23 to implement this voluntary incentive program to help eager producers implement climate-smart practices as quickly as possible.

Capital:

FarmPAI - not to exceed \$2,000,000

The Farmland Protection and Affordability Investment (FarmPAI) Program is a proposed program to support protection of high priority agricultural land at imminent risk of development. This critical and necessary program supports Washington farmers and keeps land in production. The program also facilitates land access to

underserved producers including young and beginning farmers, people of color, and veterans. FarmPAI's revolving low interest loan program for fee simple land acquisition would be managed by the Washington State Housing Finance Commission with the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) acting as a program advisor.

Supplemental budget funds are necessary as FarmPAI's success requires ready sources of conservation easement funding to permanently protect the land and make it affordable for the next generation farmer. The WSCC's agricultural conservation easements program is a strategic complement to FarmPAI in alignment with the Office of Farmland Preservation statutory goals (RCW 89.10.010). The WSCC is requesting Commission authorization to request up to \$2,000,000 for the easement account (RCW 89.08.540) through the supplemental budget. These costs could not have been anticipated at the time the agency biennial budget was developed as the program is under development.

Motion by Commissioner Dorner to approve the three budget packages for further development and submittal to Office of Financial Management by the deadline of September 13, 2021 as listed below. Seconded by Commissioner Williams. Motion carries.

Operating:

- *Conservation Equity and Engagement - not to exceed \$500,000*
- *Sustainable Farms and Fields - not to exceed \$2,000,000*

Capital:

- *FarmPAI - not to exceed \$2,000,000*

Policy & Programs (*Action*)

Additions to eligible CREP stream layer in Clallam and Palouse Conservation Districts

Chairman Longrie welcomes Brian Cochrane, SCC Habitat and Monitoring Coordinator, to present on the next agenda item. Mr. Cochrane shares that CREP in Washington has designated stream segments so that participants and practices, primarily riparian forest buffers, are in places that achieve the goal of the program: to decrease some of the impacts of agriculture on listed species of anadromous salmon and steelhead. Other practices may be installed in tributaries and hydrologically connected wetlands of the identified streams. SCC may identify up to 10,000 miles of stream for installation of riparian forest buffers; currently, 9,607 miles are eligible. Clallam and Palouse CD staff have documentation from the local tribes, and WDFW staff that habitat is limiting and CREP enrollment of adjacent lands would be beneficial, in accordance with the process. FSA County Committees have approved the proposed additions in Whitman and Clallam counties.

In Clallam CD, two landowners along tributaries to Cassalery Creek have expressed interest in CREP. Cassalery Creek is known to have cutthroat trout, winter steelhead and Coho salmon, however, lack of riparian habitat is a limiting factor for salmon in this creek. Adding the proposed stream segments will allow wider riparian forest buffers to be planted to replace the sparse shrubby habitat now dominated by invasive reed canary grass and Oregon blackberry.

In Palouse CD, recent work has removed fish barrier culverts, providing 4.8 miles of new habitat for summer steelhead in Steptoe Creek and 3.1 miles in Stuart Creek, a tributary. The landowner on lower Steptoe Creek has recently completed 12 acres of riparian buffer. More acres are anticipated upstream with four additional landowner projects due to the proposed stream additions.

Motion by Commissioner Spaeth to approve designation of 9.4 miles of eligible stream segments for CREP in Clallam and Palouse CDs per maps in Exhibit A (meeting packet page 77). Seconded by Commissioner Giglio. Motion carries.

District Operations (*Action*)

2021 CAPP Final Report

Chairman Longrie welcomes Shana Joy, SCC Regional Manager Coordinator, to present on the next agenda item. Ms. Joy explains that at the January 2021 meeting, Commissioners approved the CAPP system with eight Standards including Accountability Standard 1 with requirements for use in 2021. Completing 100% of these items is a threshold for receiving state funding through the Conservation Commission.

Forty-two conservation districts are currently meeting the Accountability Standard 1 elements that can be evaluated at this time. For reference the Accountability Standard 1 elements are included below. These are status remarks around a few of the specific accountability elements. Forty-four conservation districts submitted the annual plan of work by May 30th. King Conservation District has been granted an extension to the due date.

Pine Creek Conservation District has hired a new manager who is already actively meeting with clients in the district, making contact with neighboring districts, and exploring partnerships and opportunities for new projects. The final Pine Creek Conservation District audit has been published. The finding that was issued is pertaining to records retention of financial records. The district has taken steps to ensure proper records retention of financial records going forward. They have hired a new accountant who has taken over the daily financial duties and financial records management for the district with proper internal controls in place. The Pine Creek Conservation District is on a better path forward for timely submittal of grant vouchers as required by the contract between SCC and the district. However, sufficient time has not yet passed for the district to demonstrate that they will be meeting this requirement consistently over time.

Cascadia Conservation District has completed their new election, and Palouse Conservation District is actively working to re-do their election.

Motion by Commissioner Cochran to approve the allocation of Implementation Grant funds in the amount of \$117,823 to the Pine Creek Conservation District for fiscal year 2022. Seconded by Commissioner Williams. Motion carries.

Certification of Cascadia CD's June 9, 2021 Election

Chairman Longrie welcomes Ron Shultz, SCC Policy Director, to present on the next agenda item pertaining to the Cascadia Conservation District Election. Mr. Shultz explains that on February 5, 2021, the CCD held an election. Due to an error, no poll list was created by the CCD. As a result, the Commission failed to certify the February CCD election at its regular meeting on March 18, 2021.

CCD then went to Superior Court in Chelan County and the court invalidated the February election and ordered another election to be held. This was necessary because CCD neither CCD nor the Commission have the ability to hold an election outside of the first quarter of the year, as required by statute and our administrative code. CCD held this second election on June 9, 2021, and there were no errors during this second election.

Motion by Commissioner to Crose certify the June 9, 2021 Cascadia Conservation District Election, and announce that Dillon Miller was the winner of the CCD election. Seconded by Commissioner Cochran. Motion carries.

Adoption of Proposed Election Guide Changes

Mr. Shultz continues presenting on the next agenda item relating to the SCC election and appointment guide. Mr. Shultz shares that at the May 2021 Commission meeting, staff presented proposed changes to CD election process related to mail-in only elections. The COVID-19 pandemic social distancing protocols resulted in a number of conservation districts holding their annual election by mail-in ballot only. Previous versions of the Guide had public notices and sample election resolutions that were not specific to mail-in only elections. Commission staff separated out poll-site elections from mail-in elections, and created sample notices and resolutions for each. Those sample notices and resolutions have been added to a draft Guide and now need to be adopted for use.

The Commission's GovDelivery notice system was used on May 20, 2021 to notify CDs, per the Commission's "*Policy on Policies*," that comment on the changes could be made through July 9, 2021. No comments from CDs were received.

Motion by Commissioner Cochran to adopt the proposed changes to the "Election and Appointment Guide." Seconded by Commissioner Spaeth. Motion carries.

Commission Operations (*Action*)

Cultural Resources Policy Update

Chairman Longrie invites Jean Fike, SCC Puget Sound Regional Manager, to present on the next agenda item. Ms. Fike explains that The Commission has been operating under Executive Order 05-05 since July 2015. Policy and procedures were developed at that time to comply with EO 05-05, mitigate impacts and protect cultural resources as conservation districts implement projects funded through Commission programs.

Following the issuance of EO 21-02 on April 7, 2021 Commission staff have been in communication with DAHP to determine what changes would be needed in the Commission's cultural resources process to bring it into compliance with the new EO. As in 2015, the process is closely modeled after that used by NRCS. It is not expected that the new EO 21-02 requirements will increase compliance costs appreciably.

The WSCC cultural resource policy language is proposed to be changed from the current language to the following:

Purpose (2021):

The Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) values the protection of archeological and cultural resources. We encourage each district to develop good working relationships with local Tribes that can help inform and support their conservation activities and better protect cultural resources. The WSCC will ensure that future activities funded by WSCC are compliant with the Governor's Executive Order 21-02 regarding Archaeological and Cultural Resources.

Policy (2021):

Projects funded by the WSCC must follow current policy and procedures regarding the protection of cultural resources. Before a Conservation District can be reimbursed for conservation practices (capital construction projects) with WSCC-managed funds (regardless of source and including both Operational Funds and Capital Funds) a District must attest to WSCC that:

- 1) a cultural resource review compliant with EO 21-02 has been completed; or*
- 2) per WSCC policy the project/practice does not require EO-21-02 review; or*
- 3) a cultural resource review was conducted by another state agency in compliance with EO 21-02;*
or
- 4) a cultural resource review was conducted under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act; and*
- 5) all records pertaining to cultural resource review and tribal consultation have been emailed to DAHP.*

Additionally, unless subject to Section 106 (federal cultural resources review process) property acquisition projects culminating in soil-disturbing construction activities will be subject to cultural resources review under EO 21-02.

This language has been reviewed by DAHP and found to be in compliance with EO 21-02. Proposed changes to procedures include:

- The form used by districts to attest that their project complies with SCC cultural resources requirements will be updated.
- Moving forward, the SCC will update conservation practice lists to match the latest lists from NRCS.
- Districts will be required to email all documents related to cultural resources review and consultation to DAHP before they will be reimbursed.
- The program and concurrence from DAHP will be revisited at least every five years, as is NRCS's.
- Unless subject to Section 106 (federal cultural resources review process) property acquisition projects culminating in soil-disturbing construction activities will be required to undergo cultural resources review under EO 21-02.
- The flow chart currently posted on the SCC website will be replaced with a narrative process description.
- The process by which districts request reimbursement for cultural resources costs will be modified to match new fiscal practices.

Motion by Commissioner Crose to direct staff to publish the draft Cultural Resources Policy update for at least a 30- day review and comment period by conservation districts, with the intent that further action will be considered at the September 2021 Commission meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Spaeth. Motion carries.

2022-27 Strategic Plan revised timeline

Chairman Longrie invites Laura Meyer, SCC Communications Manager, to share the next agenda items pertaining to the 2022-27 SCC Strategic Plan. Ms. Meyer shares that at the December 3, 2020 SCC meeting, Commissioners approved a staff-proposed timeline for developing the 2022-2027 Strategic Plan. That timeline set a deadline to finalize the plan at the September 2021 Commission Meeting. It also set a May-July 2021 time period for staff to gather input from partners, including conservation districts.

Stakeholder input on our five-year plan is important, and as their primary partners, the SCC particularly want to give conservation districts adequate time to review and discuss it. They are currently gathering feedback from partners and districts on our goals, but after further discussion among staff, they are requesting an extension to the window for gathering feedback and allow more time to share details with conservation districts before the plan is finalized.

Motion by Commissioner Crose to extend the deadline to finalize the SCC 2022-2027 Strategic Plan from the September 2021 Commission Meeting to the December 2021 Commission Meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Beale. Motion carries.

2022-27 Strategic Plan goals

Ms. Meyer continues to present on the following agenda item, explaining that at the May 2021 Strategic Planning Session, Commissioners approved the majority of goals for our 2022-2027 Strategic Plan. A few goals were flagged for staff to revise and bring back for approval at the July Commission Meeting. These goals are as follows:

Agricultural and Working Lands Viability and Food System Support

- Goal flagged by Commissioners for revision: “Promote policy and funding to support farmland preservation and economic viability as part of the food system.” Suggestion to revise language to better encompass urban food system work.
 - *Revised goal for Commission review/action:* “Economically viable farms, farmland, and strong local and regional food systems.”
- Goal approved by SCC at May meeting but later flagged by staff for requested revision: “Increase and maintain water supply for agriculture.” Staff concerned that increasing water supply for agriculture may not be feasible.
 - *Revised goal for Commission review/action:* “Maintain water supply for agriculture.”

Governance and Accountability

- All goals approved at May SCC meeting, but staff would like to add one more goal to this area.
 - *Proposed new goal for Commission review/action:* “Conservation district boards are well-supported to achieve their mission.”

Leadership, Partnership, and Collaboration

- Goal flagged by Commissioners for revision: “Secure recognition and respect for our leadership in voluntary conservation and innovative natural resource solutions.” Suggestion to revise to focus more on public benefit of SCC having this recognition/respect and to make room for activities related to collecting/sharing success stories.
 - *Revised goal for Commission review/action:* “Demonstrate leadership in voluntary conservation resulting in innovative natural resource solutions that work.”
- Goals flagged for revision/potential merging: “Cultivate a broad and inclusive culture of conservation” and “Enhance cultural and social considerations in natural resource conservation.”
 - *Merged goal for Commission review/action:* “Cultivate a broad and inclusive culture of conservation.”

Motion by Commissioner Crose to approve the revised goals for the 2022-27 SCC Strategic Plan (meeting packet pages 24-26). Seconded by Commissioner Cochran. Motion carries.

Clarification of WSCC’s Voluntary Approach

Chairman Longrie invites Director Smith to present on the next agenda item. Director Smith shares that at the 2019 Centennial Accord, Governor Inslee committed to the tribes that he would instruct state agencies to implement site potential tree height buffers wherever possible. Since then, there has been a series of state/tribal meetings to further develop this commitment. WSCC has been very active in the non-regulatory discussions and absent from the regulatory meetings. Recently, WSCC has been asked to approve language in the regulatory pathway, and are seeking a decision from Commissioners regarding their participation in regulatory matters.

In the state/tribal riparian discussions, WSCC has participated in work products relating to non-regulatory topics, including voluntary incentives, monitoring, and funding. WSCC has not participated in discussions or product development involving regulation. The reasons include:

- The agency's mission is "to conserve natural resources on all lands in Washington through voluntary and incentive based programs in collaboration with conservation districts and other partners." The mission does not include regulatory activities.
- Working with conservation districts, they have been able to make greater strides in improving land stewardship and environmental conditions across Washington State using the voluntary incentive approach.
- Many landowners will not work with regulatory agencies. While regulatory agencies are able to conduct some work with landowners on a voluntary basis, there is a significant component of citizens who will not work with these agencies. These landowners can only be successfully reached by local, non-regulatory entities such as conservation districts.
- Voluntary stewardship actions help regulatory agencies, such as WDFW and Ecology, accomplish their environmental goals.
- WSCC has no regulatory authority, expertise, or extra capacity.

However, with the recent request for our approval of work products relating to riparian regulation, we seek input from the Commission as to whether or not WSCC should be involved in the regulatory discussions or continue to limit our involvement to non-regulatory topics, such as voluntary incentive programs, funding, and monitoring.

Motion by Commissioner Cochran to direct WSCC to participate in the state/tribal riparian process, consistent with agency mission, to conserve natural resources on all lands in Washington through technical assistance and voluntary, incentive based solutions in collaboration with conservation districts and other partners. Seconded by Commissioner Crose. Commissioner Beale abstains. Motion carries.

Presentation: Commodity Buffer Report

Chairman Longrie welcomes Mike Baden, SCC North Central and Northeast Regional Manager, to introduce the representatives from Spokane Conservation District (SCD) to begin presenting on the next agenda item. Walt Edelen, Water Resources Program Manager, and Seth Flanders, Commodity Buffer Coordinator, begin presenting on the Commodity Buffer Program Model.

Mr. Edelen shares some background on the program, beginning in 2010. At that time, Mr. Edelen was working to encourage landowners to enroll in continuous CRP program. Landowners shared that the problem they were having was that the program "just doesn't pay," and they couldn't afford not to profit from their highest yielding ground. SCD realized they needed a new program to get buffers on the ground, as the existing buffer programs didn't have adequate compensation. SCD began to work

on a new buffer model that would work in their dryland areas. This buffer program needed to improve farm efficiency, increase economic viability, reward landowners for protecting public interest, and give full value compensation. In 2016, SCD was awarded an RCPP. In that opportunity, they put in the commodity buffer as that innovative program. They proposed the use of USDA RMA revenue insurance models to accurately value, on a yearly basis, the land set aside in conservation, and compensated the newly set aside ground into buffers at the value of adjacent crop rotation, designed specifically for dryland agriculture in eastern Washington.

Mr. Flanders begins presenting on the process of the Commodity Buffer Program (CBP), starting with the program area. He displays a map showing the RCPP greater Spokane watershed, showing the over 200 commodity buffers in the area, extending through and past Spokane County. The program is widespread and successful, allowing producers to implement buffers adjacent to their neighbors, and even connect these buffers with their neighbors' to create a long and expansive buffer.

At the start of this program, SCD created a four-stage approach to the CBP that can be adaptable. These stages are:

1. Develop a connection between local upland practices, buffer widths, and stream types.
 - a. The first question asked was "what is a conservation buffer?" Answer: Small areas or strips of land in *permanent vegetation*, designed to *intercept pollutants* and manage other environmental concerns, including possible water quality concerns.
 - b. They took that answer and applied it to their area. In eastern WA, they get an average of 15"-30" of precipitation/year. The greatest concern during these events are excess sediment and nutrients coming into the water systems. They focused on ephemeral streams, but use the CBP as a gateway for riparian forest buffers.
 - c. Building on existing NRCS programs, SCD requires stem density to filter sediment, size determined by upland practice and stream type, options for woody species with extra incentives, and in order to protect habitat, there is a requirement of no cutting, haying, or grazing before July 1.
2. Develop an equation using variable "real world" farming factors (payment system).
 - a. Determine the buffer width and length, which provides the buffer area. Then, they take the actual proven history (APH) of that land and crop, and understand that the crop closest to a waterway will produce more than an area further away. In order to compensate for the most valuable ground, the APH is increased by 30%, and then add an additional 10% for every 10' of woody plantings put in. These numbers are multiplied by the USDA crop price for that year, which is the gross number for compensation.
 - b. There are variable costs for production, including gas and equipment, so the final equation for compensation is: $\text{buffer area} \times \text{adjusted APH} \times \text{USDA RMA price} - 35\% \text{ variable cost} = \text{net compensation}$.
 - c. Real world example of this equation.:
Width of buffers:
 - Area of 4.25 acres
APH yields for the majority adjacent crops
 - 80 Bushels of winter wheat/acre
Utilize RMA MPCI crop prices
 - \$6.59/Bushel (projected price in 2019)

Add productivity boost on this land of 30% to the APH and a 10% bonus increase to the APH for

every 10' of riparian woody planting.
= APH (30% of 80Bu/acre = 24Bu/acre) = 104Bu/acre APH
10' of riparian plants bonus = 10% of 80Bu/acre = 8Bu/acre
= 112Bu/acre

Final equation:

$4.25 \text{ Acres} \times (112\text{Bu/acre}) \times \$6.59/\text{Bushel} = \$3,137 \text{ Gross Revenue in Year 1}$

Adjustment for variable cost (-35%):

$\$3,137 \times 65\% = \$2,039 \text{ net income}$

Roughly \$480/acre payment for fall and winter wheat

SCD wanted to make sure that in case there was some sort of unforeseen event (market crash, fallow year, etc.), that the producer would still get paid for the buffer area. SCD guarantees a minimum of \$200/acre rental payment. In this case, the producer with a 4.25-acre buffer would receive an \$850 minimum payment.

In the case of a market price increase:

On October 15, if the price of the produce is higher than the RMA MPC1 projected price, 50% of the increase will be added to the RMA price. *Note: RMA prices have been about \$1-2 higher than market from 2017-20.*

3. Enhance or maintain the economics of producers' production (program characteristics).
 - a. There are multiple types of grasses in the area. After consulting with the WA State Department of Ecology and NRCS, SCD found out what types of grasses would not be eligible for implementation. Based on this, they created a list of the types of eligible grasses producers could choose from. All of these grasses created a stem density. In order to manage weeds and remove excess nutrients from the system, they allow cutting and grazing after the nesting period of July 1.
 - b. They allow existing buffers into the program, as long as they met buffer standards. Producers could upgrade existing buffers to meet design specifications.
 - c. They matched RCPP contract length, about three (3) years. Every producer has opted for longer contract lengths when given the opportunity. If there was a permanent source of funding, longer contract lengths could be offered.
 - d. They allow continuous sign-up, which allows producers to implement buffers in the best available time for them. All payments are annual in the spring.
 - e. To implement this, they meet with producers and:
 - i. Ask to provide maps with farm and tract numbers;
 - ii. Receive relevant information for the above equation, and;
 - iii. Map out buffers (verifying lengths on Google maps).
 - iv. Get adjacent crop information;
 - v. Verify buffers;
 - vi. Generate contracts through CPDS, and;
 - vii. Sign and send payment.
 - f. Each landowner is responsible for seeding and maintaining buffer to agreed specifications. One aspect SCD has found is that many producers have chosen to add extra buffer widths.
4. Compensate the producer for the *true value* of the buffer area.

- a. During year 1 of the program, there were 16 entities, 29 miles, 109 acres enrolled, which cost about \$33,000. In year 5 of this program, those numbers increased to 38 entities, 117 miles, 432 acres enrolled, with a total cost of \$125,000, a 9% increase. All 3-year contracts were extended to 5-year contracts, and 90% of those enrolled are interested in more buffers if funding were to become available.
- b. Because of the limited budget, some buffers have had to be turned away, knowing they could not be funded for multiple years.

Commodity buffers are chosen because they pay for the true value of the land. They are prescriptive, flexible to local upland practices, cost effective, they set standards, and although they are complicated to put in, the agency performs that task. They address local environmental concerns, and it may also address non-relevant environmental concerns.

ECY has encouraged landowners to utilize this program to comply with water quality standards for nutrients and sediment. They would like mandatory riparian planting in a portion of buffer, larger buffer sizes, and minimum 5-year contracts. There is tribal and local support from the Coeur d'Alene and Spokane tribes, VSP work plans, Spokane River Forum, and Spokane Riverkeeper and other stakeholders.

Through the RCPP, the SCC has agreed to assist in financial assistance for WA, and ECY is currently funding an SCD grant for Hangman Creek and want to implement a type of CBP with minor changes. Currently, the SCD is funding its own small CBP through their general budget.

For other CDs to implement this type of program, it is crucial to develop connection between local upland practices, buffer widths, and stream types, and develop an equation using variable "real world" farming factors. They would also want to enhance or maintain economics of production, and compensate producers for the true value of the buffer area. SCD believes this program has the potential to grow into a statewide, if not a nationwide, program. In this, the SCC is critical to the future, and could make significant impacts to water quality across the state.

District Operations (*Information*)

District Operations Report

Chairman Longrie welcomes Mike Baden to present the District Operations Report. Mr. Baden shares that the regional managers have been hard at work, with some of their accomplishments in areas like wildfire recovery, hazard mitigation grant implementation, continued COVID-19 response, and more.

Mr. Baden and Allisa Carlson, SCC South Central Regional Manager, worked with SCC financial staff and several districts impacted by the 2020 wildfires to update and refine our wildfire recovery funding allocation procedures and FAQs. The new procedures are planned to be released on July 7th and be available on the SCC website for reference as well.

Mr. Baden is leading implementation of a Hazard Mitigation Grant that the SCC is receiving from the Department of Emergency Management. Six trainings were completed in the spring:

- Home ignition zone training ("Assessing Structure Ignition Potential from Wildfires – ASIP"), delivered by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) trainers
- Outreach Strategies for Community Wildfire Preparedness and Recovery, co-organized and delivered by Val Vissia, Lincoln County CD, and Laura Meyer (SCC)
- Post-Fire Risk Mitigation and Assessment Training, organized and delivered by Okanogan CD

Three more ASIP trainings will be scheduled for this fall as well as an additional; “Outreach Strategies for Community Wildfire Preparedness and Recovery” training. In addition, 16 counties were written into the grant to receive a small amount of funds to conduct a handful of Home Ignition Zone Assessments upon successful completion of an ASIP training with the idea being to “practice what you learn”. This work will begin in the new fiscal year.

Josh Giuntoli, SCC represents the Executive Director of the Commission as ex-officio member of the Chehalis Basin Board (CBB). Since the last report, the Office of Chehalis Basin (OCB) received a budget of \$70m for aquatic and flood work in the Chehalis Basin. The budget directs that \$33.05m is provided for board-approved projects to protect and restore aquatic species habitat, \$33.05m for board-approved projects to reduce flood damage, and \$3.9m for operations of OCB and CBB. The Board has been presented options for how the \$70m budget can be allocated, and at the June 3 board meeting, a final consensus of voting members was not reached.

Chehalis Basin CDs continue to engage in work associated with the Early Action Reaches within the Aquatic Species Restoration Program (ASRP) while continuing to provide valuable on-the-ground work in the Basin. Key work continues to be landowner engagement with aspects of the Chehalis Basin Strategy. These private lands partners are critical to the success of flood and fish recovery in the Basin. With the construction window opening in July for instream work on public and private lands, partners are excited to see work to improve natural resource conditions.

Partner Updates *(Information)*

Chairman Longrie invites Mike Kuttel, Jr., of the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to provide a brief update from the agency. Mr. Kuttel shares that Angela (Angie) Reseland has recently begun her new role with WDFW as their Farm Bill Coordinator. Ms. Reseland joins and shares that she is looking forward to working with the Commission. Before joining WDFW, she worked in Seaside, Oregon, as a coordinator for the Necanicum Watershed Council, working on restoration projects to benefit fish and wildlife, and improve habitat. She also wrote and managed grants, conducted education and outreach in the community, and led public meetings.

Commission Operations *(Information)*

Chairman Longrie welcomes back Director Smith to share a general update from the SCC. Director Smith announces that she has chosen to retire from her position at the end of this year. Her effective last day in the office will be October 22, and the last official day will be December 31. She will take leave between these dates. She is thankful to have gotten the chance to work in this capacity with the Commission. Chairman Longrie assembles a search committee of Commissioners to begin the process of hiring a new Executive Director. These members are: Chairman Longrie, Commissioner Beale, Commissioner Crose, Commissioner Dorner, Commissioner Kropf, Commissioner Spaeth, and Commissioner Williams.

Chairman Longrie adjourns the meeting at 1:54 p.m.