

Southwest Area Association Meeting Minutes

Hosted by Grays Harbor Conservation District

Held through Zoom Videoconference

October 13, 2021

Present: Clark CD: Zorah Oppenheimer, Sue Marshall, George Brereton, Sam Frundle, Natalie Kozlowski, Mackenna Milosvich, Brendon Addis
Cowlitz CD: John Keatley, Lynn Simpson, Jim Mallet, Joe Shulke
Grays Harbor CD: Mike Nordin, Lisa Zaborac
Lewis CD: Bruce Anderson
Pacific CD: Rebecca Chaffe, David Marcell,
Thurston CD: Doug Rushton, Sarah Moorehead
Wahkiakum CD: Tirzah Gross, Darin Houpt, Marshall Stowe

WACD: Tom Salzer, Ryan Baye, Mike Mumford
WSCC: Shana Joy, Josh Giuntoli, Carol Smith, Nathan Gallan
NRCS: Dave Rose, Roylene Comes at Night, Nick Vira, Austin Shero
WDFW: Angie Reseland
Ecology: Heather Pat

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 with a welcome from the host district and self-introductions by those present.

Conservation Leadership Forum (*summarized*)

Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) – *Carol Smith*

Carol Smith discussed the Commission's three supplemental legislative funding requests: Sustainable Farms and Fields grant program, conservation equality and engagement, and farmland preservation. The recommendations of the Joint Committee on Elections were presented. Staffing changes at the commission were announced, including upcoming hires and Carol Smith's departure as Executive Director. After presenting on the agency's upcoming 5-Year Long Range Plan, Carol and Commission staff took questions.

Washington Association of Conservation Districts - *Ryan Baye and Tom Salzer*

Tom and Ryan announced details of the 2021 WACD Virtual Annual Conference. They broke down the work of the two WACD special committee, DEI and Elections. They discussed the activity at the WACD Plant Materials Center and gathered feedback on potential bylaw proposals under consideration. WACD Area Director John Keatley stated how WACD was solvent, Treasurer Dave Fenn was doing a great job, and communications were improving with introduction of monthly WACD Board meetings.

Natural Resource Conservation Service – *Roylene Comes at Night and Dave Rose*

State Conservationist Roylene Comes at Night discussed how COVID restrictions were affecting local offices. She detailed the various funding amount for different NRCS programs as well as reflecting on the challenges to ACEP. She announced new funding opportunities and introduced Dave Rose as the Western Area Conservationist. Both Roylene and Dave answered questions.

Area Resolutions

Doug Rushton, Thurston CD, moved to adopt as Southwest Area Resolution #1 a resolution creating a permanent WACD Sustainable Funding Committee. Second by Sue Marshall. John Keatley offered a friendly amendment to remove WACD as a potential recipient of any funds raised by this group, the amendment was accepted. The resolution was adopted by unanimous consent.

John Keatley, Cowlitz CD, moved to adopt as Southwest Area Resolution #2 a proposed workplace policy improvement resolution. Second by Jim Mallet. Concerns were raised that the proposed resolution could conflict with Thurston CD's bargaining agreement, could violate the Commission's statutory limits, or give an outside entity the ability to interfere with a district's authority. Supporters pointed to the number of possible resources available in the HR realm that should be more available to districts and the difficulties faced this year. A voice vote was inconclusive. The resolution was adopted on a 6-5 vote.

Area Awards

Pacific CD was recognized as Southwest District of the Year. Special Recognition Awards were also granted to Clark CD Supervisor April Thatcher, Department of Veteran Affairs employee Kim Pham, and Grays Harbor CD staff member Lorenzo Churape.

Area Business

Doug Rushton moved to approve the 2020 area meeting minutes as presented. Second by George Brereton. Motion carried by unanimous consent.

John Keatley announced his resignation as Area Director and asked a mid-term election be held at the area meeting. Jim Mallet nominated Marshall Stowe, Wahkiakum CD, to fill the one-year vacancy. There were no other nominations and Marshall's election was approved.

George Brereton nominated Jerry Kolke, Clark CD to fill the other Area Director position. Marshall Stowe nominated Lisa Zaborac, Grays Harbor CD. A voice vote was inconclusive. Lisa Zaborac was elected by a 5-4 vote with one abstention.

District Presentations

At the request of those present, the district presentations were foregone.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:39.