

**Washington Association of Conservation Districts  
North Central Area Annual Meeting  
October 19, 2022  
NCW Fairgrounds Community Hall  
601 N Monroe Street  
Waterville, WA 98858**

**From:** Carol Cowling, South Douglas Conservation District

**Present: (as signed in)**

Carol Cowling, Staff, South Douglas CD	Craig Nelson, Staff, Okanogan CD
Lindsey Morrison, Supervisor, South Douglas CD	John Preston, Supervisor, Col. Basin CD
Carol Cowling, Staff, South Douglas CD	Albert Roberts, Supervisor, Okanogan CD
Eileen Bone, Volunteer, South Douglas CD	Elliot DeLong, Supervisor, Col. Basin CD
Mike Lesky, Supervisor, South Douglas CD	Kristina Ribellia Staff, Col. Basin CD
Carolyn Kelly, Supervisor, South Douglas CD	Harold Crose, Staff, Col. Basin CD
Joe Sprauer, Supervisor, South Douglas CD	Richard Leitz, Supervisor, Col. Basin CD
Ryan Williams, Staff, Cascadia CD	John Culp, WSCC
Ryan Lefler, Staff Foster Creek CD	Shana Joy, WSCC
Becca Hebron, Staff, Foster Creek CD	Mike Mumford, WACD
Kelsey Tanneberg, Supervisor, Foster Creek CD	Ryan Baye, WACD
John McLean, Supervisor, Foster Creek CD	Tom Salzer, WACD
Mike Baden, WSCC	Doug Rushton, WACD
Chris Pettit, WSCC	Nathan Cook, WDFW
	Jesse Morris, WDFW
	Mike Rickel, WDFW
	Jesse Morris, WDFW

**Welcome and Introductions**

Meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Mike Lesky, South Douglas Conservation District, followed by self-introductions.

**Conservation Leadership Forum:**

Chris Pettit gave an overview of Salmon Recovery and Riparian restoration. The stress is to get projects on the ground. Outreach is important given the available funding to accomplish projects.

**Elections – Conservation Month**

To provide more transparency for CD elections, March has been designated as Conservation Month. More outreach materials will be available to make elections more visible to voters, without mandates imposed.

More staff and other issues discussed. Conservation Equity and Engagement program is being developed to reach all those involved in all potential conservation projects.

2022-2027 Strategic Plan accepted at May 2022 Commission meeting.

Mike Mumford, current WACD President, Tom Salzer and Ryan Baye updated on the WACD programs. With a lean staff, they are still able to organize the annual WACD meeting to be held in Wenatchee, November, 2022. Legislature for 2023 is budget year – keep in mind Districts’ needs.

John McLean, Area Director, updated on what is going in Olympia.

Craig Nelson, OK CD, asked why only 10 million was being appropriated for Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) Chris P replied that there may be an opportunity for more funding, depending on how it will be used. They are working on needs and responsibilities. Shana J said they are working on the budget for a more reasonable amount.

Nick Vira – NRCS

The NRCS workload is impacted by limited budget and personnel. They were not updating data which has impacted the budget but with increased staff hopes this is remedied. Need to increase certified planner opportunities for CDs. Urban Ag and Climate Smart Grants may be beneficial to CDs.

Austen Shero – NRCS

EQIP and CRP contracts have fewer contracts but more dollars available. He emphasized the staffing and recruiting challenges NRCS faces. Locally led conservation is very important.

Doug Rushton – WACD President

Water law and rural development, forest health, wildlife and the need for a fisheries biologist are all projects WACD is working on.

### **Questions/Answers/Discussion**

Craig Nelson asked about NRCS ramping up training for planners. Not a lot of level 3 NRCS planners available. While on line certification is available, it is very slow and in person is much more important for training. Harold Crose thinks if we did the training ourselves with NRCS certification we could have more CD planners. Ryan Williams is working on a program to increase expertise for CD & NRCS staff. Shauna Joy stated a multi agency training in Minnesota is doing well and we could look into their program guidelines. Harold said real learning is on the ground. AgLearn is good on line, but mentoring is better. Mike Lesky suggested job shadowing and working with Wenatchee Valley College to have students become planners.

Question on why CRP was demoted in NRCS programs. Reply is that it is an FSA program now.

Water Smart Funding – Can spread program over three or four years so can take small bites with small contracts. Large contracts can be cumbersome with personnel, inflation, etc.

Tom Salzer wondered if Equity and Engagement Initiative is an opportunity to engage new cooperators, or are we thinking “oh, no, someone new?” The challenge is to encourage new people to participate in conservation programs.

## **Resolutions:**

### **#1 WSCC Cost Share Rates on Public Lands**

Presented by Okanogan Conservation District

Albert Roberts/Carolyn Kelly to accept.

Recommendation: WACD to work with the WCC to seek cost share rates for projects that occur on public lands that are equitable to cost share projects on private lands. Passed unanimously.

### **#2 WA DOE Water Bank Program**

Presented by Okanogan Conservation District

Albert Roberts/Carolyn Kelly to accept.

Recommendation: WACD resolves to work with the WA legislature and Department of Ecology to expand the Water Bank Program and lift the \$2 million cap per applicant rule. Passed unanimously.

### **#3 Review of FSA Practice Standards**

Presented by Foster Creek Conservation District

John McLean/John Preston to accept.

Request for USA FSA and NRCS to reviews existing program standards to see if they are still current and that the necessary training and awareness for the staff, partners, and local cooperators is taking placed. Passed unanimously.

## **District Awards:**

District of the Year – Foster Creek Conservation District

## **District Updates:**

Districts present gave updates on the projects they are currently working on. Lots of conservation going on out there!

## **Area Business:**

Approval of 2021 NCW Area meeting minutes. Carolyn Kelly moved to approve. John Preston seconded. Approved unanimously.

No changes to the NCW area Articles and By Laws.

## **Election of Area Director:**

John Preston moved to elect John McLean. Carolyn Kelly seconded. Passed unanimously.

Final thoughts:

Adams CD to host 2023 NCW area meeting

2022 WACD annual meeting will be in Wenatchee

Meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.