



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

RESOLUTION 2023-11

RESOLUTION TITLE: Multiple Year Plant Materials Contracts with Conservation Districts

SPONSORING ENTITY/IES CD(s): Grays Harbor Conservation District

AREA: NW SW NC SC NE SE

RESOLUTION TYPE:

- Policy
- Position Statement
- Recognition
- Study

RESOLUTION ACTION AGENCY (check any option that applies):

- WACD
- WSCC
- OTHER STATE AGENCY _____
- NRCS
- NACD (See Page 2)
- NON-STATE/FEDERAL PARTNER _____

TYPE OF TEXT OF RESOLUTION (check all boxes that apply):

- Technical (changes address grammar, punctuation, sentence flow and makes **NO** substantive change(s) to the existing policy.
- Substantive change to existing policy. If in doubt, check the box.
- New policy.

BACKGROUND DESCRIBING THE ISSUE/PROBLEM STATEMENT:

Riparian plant materials demand is at an all time high statewide due to multiple factors including an influx of funding aimed at salmon and riparian habitat restoration as well as the success of conservation districts in educating and providing assistance to landowners interested in riparian planting projects.

For as long as it has existed, the Washington Association of Conservation Districts Plant Materials Center (WACD PMC) has been the go-to vendor for all conservation districts looking to purchase restoration grade, native plant materials. The spike in demand for these types of plants has also brought growth and additional production of these materials by the WACD PMC to try and meet that demand. Looking ahead, however, the demand for native plant materials is going to continue to grow.

Our Tribal partners throughout Washington who also implement large-scale riparian restoration projects have acknowledged this potential for increased demand by contracting with the WACD PMC to guarantee their plant materials orders over several seasons. While we believe this is a great business opportunity for the PMC, WACD and its members, this may end up posing a problem for Washington State Conservation Districts who will be looking to the WACD PMC to fulfill their growing native plant material needs.



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

PROPOSED RESOLUTION LANGUAGE:

WACD shall create a contracting mechanism for conservation districts to secure multi season grow agreements, comparable to the contracts secured recently with Tribal partners in Washington State before the 2024-2025 planting season.

IS THERE A WACD FINANCIAL IMPLICATION TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY? (Funding [required](#), staff time, etc.)

NO

YES (briefly explain): Yes, the WACD Director, staff and PMC management will need to complete the same amount of work (hours unknown) to analyze when and how to achieve this goal.



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

RESOLUTION 2023-12

RESOLUTION TITLE: SCC SRF funding including planning and design funding

SPONSORING ENTITY/IES CD(s): PCD

AREA: NW SW NC SC NE SE

RESOLUTION TYPE:

- Policy
- Position Statement
- Recognition
- Study

RESOLUTION ACTION AGENCY (check any option that applies):

- WACD
- WSCC
- OTHER STATE AGENCY _____
- NRCS _____
- NACD (See Page 2)
- NON-STATE/FEDERAL PARTNER _____

TYPE OF TEXT OF RESOLUTION (check all boxes that apply):

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- New policy.

BACKGROUND DESCRIBING THE ISSUE/PROBLEM STATEMENT:

CD's cannot efficiently plan or implement SRF projects without capacity to reach out to potential cooperating landowners without funding capacity. This was missed when working on the budget proviso for SRF.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION LANGUAGE:

WACD and WSCC will make efforts to get project planning and design included into funding use again.

IS THERE A WACD FINANCIAL IMPLICATION TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY? (Funding **required**, staff time, etc.)

- NO
- YES (briefly explain):



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

RESOLUTION 2023-13

SHORT TITLE – CLUSTER ARCHAEOLOGIST

SPONSOR CD: Thurston CD & North Central Area

AREA: NW SW NC SC NE SE

RESOLUTION TYPE:

- Policy
- Position Statement
- Recognition
- Study

RESOLUTION ACTION AGENCY (check any option that applies):

- WACD
- WSCC
- OTHER STATE AGENCY _____
- NRCS
- NACD
- NON-STATE/FEDERAL PARTNER _____

BACKGROUND/PROBLEM STATEMENT:

Conservation districts often have need for archeological work to move projects forward and meet landowner goals. Often there is insufficient work on a single district and for a single district to hire a consultant or staff archaeologist can be cost prohibitive.

Therefore, like the engineering clusters, several districts can go together to meet the demand for archaeological work and also share the costs. This would enable districts to timely meet demands for various projects and needs.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION LANGUAGE:

WACD and WSCC work together in coordination with interested districts in assessing the need(s), logistics of hiring, housing, and supervision of cluster archaeologist(s). Advise participating CDs.

TYPE OF TEXT OF RESOLUTION (check all boxes that apply):

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- New policy.



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

ARE WACD RESOURCES (FUNDING, STAFF CAPACITY, ETC.) REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY?

NO

YES (briefly explain): Estimate 4-6 hours for research and coordination.



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

RESOLUTION 2023-14

SHORT TITLE: Communication about Fire Breaks in CRP

SPONSOR CD: Walla Walla County Conservation District

AREA: NW SW NC SC NE SE

RESOLUTION TYPE:

- Policy
- Position Statement
- Recognition
- Study

RESOLUTION ACTION AGENCY (check any option that applies):

- WACD**
- WSCC**
- OTHER STATE AGENCY** _____ **DNR, WSDA, WA Military Dept.** _____
- NRCS**
- NACD**
- NON-STATE/FEDERAL PARTNER** _____ **USDA FSA** _____

BACKGROUND/PROBLEM STATEMENT: Since 1983, the National Interagency Fire Center has documented an average of approximately 70,000 wildfires a year and the extent of area burned has increased each year since the 1980's. Those wildfires have burned through forests, agricultural lands, neighborhoods and whole towns, protected lands, public and private lands. Through the Community Wildfire Protection Plan and Hazard Mitigation Plan processes, local fire departments have asked for continuous fuel breaks in and adjacent to CRP grasslands and forested areas.

It is NOT common knowledge that fire breaks can be established in high-risk areas within the life of a USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) though the (see 2-CRP (Rev. 6) WA Amend.1). If producers with CRP contracts worked with their local fire districts for best placed fire breaks, then firefighters could get the upper hand on fires, therefore reducing the amount of acreage burned and damage caused. These fire breaks don't need to be bare ground. The Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) allows for green strips to be installed. These are wider than bare soil buffers that are planted with species that are drought tolerant, stay green longer through the summer (the common high wildfire occurring months through much of the country), are easily managed, and provide an increase in native habitat. Both buffers require maintenance through life of the contract but could aid in slowing and/or stopping a fire from advancing.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION LANGUAGE:



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

WACD and NACD will work together with FSA & NRCS to educate landowners/producers enrolled in CRP of the option for establishing fire breaks (both bare ground and green strips) in high-risk areas within CRP stands.

CRP contract holders will work with local fire district to install well placed fire breaks within their CRP acreage to help the spread of wildfires.

Landowners/producers will maintain fire breaks through the life of the contract.

TYPE OF TEXT OF RESOLUTION (check all boxes that apply):

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- New policy.

ARE WACD RESOURCES (FUNDING, STAFF CAPACITY, ETC.) REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY?

- NO**
- YES** (briefly explain):



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

RESOLUTION 2023-15

RESOLUTION TITLE: Encouraging NRCS Field Office Staff Attendance at WACD Meetings

SPONSORING ENTITY/IES CD(s): Okanogan CD

AREA: NW SW NC SC NE SE

RESOLUTION TYPE:

- Policy
- Position Statement
- Recognition
- Study

RESOLUTION ACTION AGENCY (check any option that applies):

- WACD
- WSCC
- OTHER STATE AGENCY _____
- NRCS
- NACD (See Page 2)
- NON-STATE/FEDERAL PARTNER _____

TYPE OF TEXT OF RESOLUTION (check all boxes that apply):

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- New policy.

BACKGROUND DESCRIBING THE ISSUE/PROBLEM STATEMENT:

Conservation Districts and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) have historically had a close, supportive relationship. The relationship has benefited from many offices being co-located, planning programs collaboratively, and supporting each other's programs from the local level up.

Discussions during WACD Area and Annual meetings often turn to subjects which pertain directly to fields of study which NRCS employees have particular expertise and/or knowledge. Having NRCS Field Office staff such as District Conservationists and Resource Conservationists at a minimum at these meetings helps increase the flow of timely and accurate information so appropriate decisions can be made by attendees and assembled conservation family leadership.

Furthermore, this is a critical opportunity for NRCS employees to learn about conservation district, Conservation Commission, and other partner programs, policies, and conservation priorities. These conversations become the basis of a solid foundation for the development of combined program planning for the coming year and strong understanding of mutual priorities.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION LANGUAGE:



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

WACD shall work with Washington State NRCS leadership to ensure field office staff at least at the Resource Conservationist and District Conservationist levels are invited and supported to participate in all future WACD Area and Annual meetings.

IS THERE A WACD FINANCIAL IMPLICATION TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY? (Funding required, staff time, etc.)

NO

YES (briefly explain): Staff time to work with NRCS



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

RESOLUTION 2023-16

RESOLUTION TITLE: Support Supplemental Funding to Conservation Commission

SPONSORING ENTITY/IES CD(s): Okanogan CD

AREA: NW SW NC SC NE SE

RESOLUTION TYPE:

- Policy
- Position Statement
- Recognition
- Study

RESOLUTION ACTION AGENCY (check any option that applies):

- WACD
- WSCC
- OTHER STATE AGENCY WA Office of Financial Management and WA State Leg.
- NRCS
- NACD (See Page 2)
- NON-STATE/FEDERAL PARTNER _____

TYPE OF TEXT OF RESOLUTION (check all boxes that apply):

- Technical (changes address grammar, punctuation, sentence flow and makes **NO** substantive change(s) to the existing policy.
- Substantive change to existing policy. If in doubt, check the box.
- New policy.

BACKGROUND DESCRIBING THE ISSUE/PROBLEM STATEMENT:

The Washington State Legislature provided significant funding to Conservation Districts in the current biennial budget in some categories. Some of these appropriations were at historically high levels. Unfortunately, some issues have already risen up related to gaps in funding, shortfall of basic technical assistance funding to plan and design projects, and in some cases a shortfall of funding in existing high demand programs.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION LANGUAGE:

WACD and member CDs work with the Washington State Legislature, Washington State Conservation Commission, and Washington State Office of Financial Management to support a \$10 million increase in conservation technical assistance (CTA) funding for CDs, and an additional \$5 million in Voluntary Stewardship Program Implementation funding.

IS THERE A WACD FINANCIAL IMPLICATION TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY? (Funding required, staff time, etc.)

- NO
- YES (briefly explain): Staff time to work with partners and legislators.



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

RESOLUTION 2023-17

SHORT TITLE: Support SCC supplemental budget requests
SPONSOR CD: Palouse
AREA: <input type="checkbox"/> NW <input type="checkbox"/> SW <input type="checkbox"/> NC <input type="checkbox"/> SC <input type="checkbox"/> NE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SE
RESOLUTION TYPE: <input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Position Statement <input type="checkbox"/> Recognition <input type="checkbox"/> Study
RESOLUTION ACTION AGENCY (check any option that applies): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WACD <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WSCC <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER STATE AGENCY <u>Governor's Office of Financial Management</u> <input type="checkbox"/> NRCS <input type="checkbox"/> NACD <input type="checkbox"/> NON-STATE/FEDERAL PARTNER _____

BACKGROUND/PROBLEM STATEMENT: Conservation districts, including Palouse CD, have seen a rising increase in demand for services from local landowners, partners, and stakeholders in recent years and securing additional funding to enable conservation districts to at least meet a portion of the rising demand has not been in step. Significant investments in the SCC and our state's 45 local conservation districts are needed right now to ensure our collective efforts to improve water quality, restore and protect habitat, meet the growing demand for services related to food security, and enhance soil and forest health are successful. The SCC has worked with conservation districts to prepare supplemental budget requests to fund conservation districts' work locally. Without adequate support from WACD and all conservation districts across the state, these budget packages may not be successful in securing funds from the Governor and legislature.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION LANGUAGE:

WACD will work closely with all conservation districts statewide, SCC and other partners, to fully support the SCC supplemental budget requests (including but not limited to CTA, RCPP, and SCC Staffing and Operations) through contacts with the Governor's Office of Financial Management and Legislators.



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

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- New policy.

IS THERE A BUDGET IMPLICATION TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY?

NO

YES (briefly explain): Significant investments in the SCC and our state's 45 local conservation districts are needed right now to ensure our collective efforts to improve water quality, restore and protect habitat, meet the growing demand for services related to food security, and enhance soil and forest health are successful.



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

RESOLUTION 2023-18

RESOLUTION TITLE: Affirming and Empowering Locally Led Voluntary Conservation
SPONSORING ENTITY/IES CD(s): Central Klickitat
AREA: <input type="checkbox"/> NW <input type="checkbox"/> SW <input type="checkbox"/> NC <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SC <input type="checkbox"/> NE <input type="checkbox"/> SE
RESOLUTION TYPE: <input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Position Statement <input type="checkbox"/> Recognition <input type="checkbox"/> Study
RESOLUTION ACTION AGENCY (check any option that applies): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WACD <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WSCC <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER STATE AGENCY _____ <input type="checkbox"/> NRCS <input type="checkbox"/> NACD (See Page 2) <input type="checkbox"/> NON-STATE/FEDERAL PARTNER _____
TYPE OF TEXT OF RESOLUTION (check all boxes that apply): <input type="checkbox"/> Technical (changes address grammar, punctuation, sentence flow and makes NO substantive change(s) to the existing policy. <input type="checkbox"/> Substantive change to existing policy. If in doubt, check the box. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New policy.
BACKGROUND DESCRIBING THE ISSUE/PROBLEM STATEMENT: The WSCC-CD relationship has deteriorated over the last 3 years. As the WSCC has grown, new programs and staff are serving a wider variety of entities, and the prior close WSCC-CD coordination and collaboration has diminished. WSCC is not prioritizing its fundamental, statutory, role of providing support to CDs in some SCC program areas. CD's have experienced reduced support from WSCC leadership and staff. The conservation family must do whatever is needed to empower locally led decision making and the traditionally strong conservation family that has brought SCC and CD's success in grassroots conservation. WSCC isn't consistently engaging CD input on changes that have significant impact to CD operations and landowners. WSCC programs are increasingly engaging more outside partner entities, but programs and staff need to keep CDs at the forefront and continue the long established relationship, service and support that has brought both WSCC and CD's success in conservation of natural resources. WSCC's strategic plan lacks prioritization of SCC's support of CD's. It is critical that this historic foundation is maintained not just in statute but in the day-to-day operations of the conservation family.



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

PROPOSED RESOLUTION LANGUAGE:

WACD shall start the following work immediately after statewide adoption of this resolution and annually present the results for discussion at the WACD annual meeting:

WACD shall work with CDs and WSCC to prioritize support of CDs as the primary local entity through which WSCC's voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs are built and implemented.

WACD shall work with CDs and WSCC to ensure CDs are engaged early on in contract language changes, program and policy development or updates and budget development. WACD shall support WSCC to update the policy on policies to include CD review of not just policy changes but also changes to contracts and guidelines given those have a direct impact on CD operations.

WACD shall assist WSCC to prioritize the re-establishment of an agency-wide culture in support of locally-led conservation that is implemented by conservation districts. WACD shall work with WSCC to provide clear direction for WSCC staff to strive to provide the highest level of customer service and support for CD's boards and staff for the implementation of locally led conservation.

WACD shall work with CDs and WSCC to review the SCC strategic plan and emphasize support to CD's and locally led conservation.

WACD shall work with WSCC Commissioners to provide direction to the new Executive Director to emphasize and prioritize SCC program and staff support of CD's boards and staff for the implementation of locally led conservation.

WACD shall organize a yearly in-person meeting/town hall between CDs and SCC members.

WACD shall organize at least yearly an in-person meeting/town hall between CDs and SCC staff.

In preparation for the 2024 legislative session and strengthening the SCC and CD relationship, WACD shall convene a panel of CDs, including this resolution sponsor, to review RCW 89.08 and identify opportunities to update RCW 89.08 to strength CD's locally led mantra and emphasize SCC's role to support local CDs boards leadership. This work shall not be used to open RCW 89.08 for legislative changes but to prepare to make improvements IF other legislation is presented that will open RCW 89.08 for other edits.

IS THERE A WACD FINANCIAL IMPLICATION TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY? (Funding required, staff time, etc.)

NO

YES (briefly explain):

This will require WACD and WSCC staff time to implement changes in policy and organizational culture.



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

RESOLUTION 2023-19

RESOLUTION TITLE: Fire Response through creation of Rangeland Fire Protection Associations

SPONSORING ENTITY/IES CD(s):

AREA: NW SW NC SC NE SE

RESOLUTION TYPE:

- Policy
- Position Statement
- Recognition
- Study

RESOLUTION ACTION AGENCY (check any option that applies):

- WACD
- WSCC
- OTHER STATE AGENCY _____
- NRCS
- NACD (See Page 2)
- NON-STATE/FEDERAL PARTNER BLM, DNR

TYPE OF TEXT OF RESOLUTION (check all boxes that apply):

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- New policy.

BACKGROUND DESCRIBING THE ISSUE/PROBLEM STATEMENT:

Washington State has roughly 19.8 million acres of Public Lands under the responsibility of various agencies. These public lands play a critical role in the working landscapes and are often rented by area producers to utilize as a source of grazing ground. Recently, these lands have been subject to devastating wildfires that are often left to burn in a controlled manner due to limited resources, jurisdiction authority, and issues with personnel authority clearance. Once fires are burned, the same issue comes into play for the management of wildfire recovery, leaving lands at risk of noxious weed pressures and degraded infrastructure such as fencing, post fire. Local area producers that rent that land as a pasture source must undergo the burden of sourcing other forage to feed herds, in addition to land loss totals anywhere from \$100-\$200 an acre and loss of grain lands amounting to \$100-\$300 an acre.

The creation of area Rangeland Fire Protection Associations can help with fire response by building local capacity to respond to wildfire emergencies in addition to other crews who may be dispatched to that area. This will also create an opportunity to develop a local training program that increases cohesiveness and effectiveness between area districts and other fire response entities at times of emergency. Lastly,



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

this would provide access to military surplus equipment to help bolster effective response to these wildfires. These actions could lessen the impact to the working landscape and provide a better nexus of response and protection throughout rural areas. These actions could increase capacity and limit negative impact to working lands in future fires.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION LANGUAGE:

We recommend that work towards developing Rangeland Fire Protection Associations throughout rural areas where public working lands are plentiful, intersect with private operations, and fire response ability is low. In addition, county representatives and invested stakeholders along with the public agencies in charge of managing public working lands should convene to build area Memorandum of Agreement to line out duties of response, create systems for training, and explore options for providing necessary equipment to fight rural wildland fires. Work should also be done to denote who has operational authority over public lands that do not currently have an assigned land manager.

IS THERE A WACD FINANCIAL IMPLICATION TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY? (Funding required, staff time, etc.)

NO

YES (briefly explain): Staff time to coordinate, develop, and implement this program. Staff time to find funding to prepare for and support these associations.



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

RESOLUTION 2023-20

RESOLUTION TITLE: Addressing VSP Management Issues

SPONSORING ENTITY/IES CD(s): Okanogan CD

AREA: NW SW NC SC NE SE

RESOLUTION TYPE:

- Policy
- Position Statement
- Recognition
- Study

RESOLUTION ACTION AGENCY (check any option that applies):

- WACD
- WSCC
- OTHER STATE AGENCY _____
- NRCS
- NACD (See Page 2)
- NON-STATE/FEDERAL PARTNER _____

TYPE OF TEXT OF RESOLUTION (check all boxes that apply):

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- New policy.

BACKGROUND DESCRIBING THE ISSUE/PROBLEM STATEMENT:

The Voluntary Stewardship Program has been both a source of great accomplishment and heartache for program implementers. The program offers local communities an opportunity to control their destiny regarding the potential for regulations on agricultural lands where they intersect with designated critical areas.

However, the program has also been a source of constant turmoil for those who are tasked with implementing the program at the local level. The Conservation Commission, tasked by state law to administer the program, has regularly developed program rules, grant policies, and budget guides in place without any discussion or conversation with those who implement the program. Furthermore, despite repeated requests for more inclusive discussions, conversations, and direct trainings between participants for several years the program is stuck on letting individual county technical leads having to learn tasks, procedures, and processes on their own.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION LANGUAGE:



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

WACD and member CDs shall work with partners to encourage the Conservation Commission to apply their 'policy on policies' for the VSP program, require Commission VSP staff to host two hybrid (in-person and virtual) trainings for the program each year, and implement a comprehensive review of all program policies and make recommendations to the Conservation Commission for changes to said policies to bring them in line with standard Commission grant programs by the May 2024 meeting.

IS THERE A WACD FINANCIAL IMPLICATION TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY? (Funding required, staff time, etc.)

NO

YES (briefly explain): Staff time to work with partners and Commission



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

RESOLUTION 2023-21

RESOLUTION TITLE: WACD, SCC, CD's Summer/Fall Legislative Workshops

SPONSORING ENTITY/IES CD(s): PCD

AREA: NW SW NC SC NE SE

RESOLUTION TYPE:

- Policy
- Position Statement
- Recognition
- Study

RESOLUTION ACTION AGENCY (check any option that applies):

- WACD
- WSCC
- OTHER STATE AGENCY _____
- NRCS
- NACD (See Page 2)
- NON-STATE/FEDERAL PARTNER _____

TYPE OF TEXT OF RESOLUTION (check all boxes that apply):

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BACKGROUND DESCRIBING THE ISSUE/PROBLEM STATEMENT:

Often WACD, SCC, and CD's are not on the same page in terms of Legislative budget requests, and most attempts at getting on page tend to be too late in the year before Legislative sessions.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION LANGUAGE:

SCC, WACD, with CD's invited, will hold at least two Legislative budget workshops between July to Sept. annually, with additional electronic correspondence as needed. All efforts must be completed before SCC submits it's budget request to OFM.

IS THERE A WACD FINANCIAL IMPLICATION TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY? (Funding **required**, staff time, etc.)

- NO
- YES (briefly explain): Staff hours and resources for several workshops



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

RESOLUTION 2023-22

SHORT TITLE: Cancelling of Farm Service Agency Contracts

SPONSOR CD: Whitman CD

AREA: NW SW NC SC NE SE

RESOLUTION TYPE:

- Policy
- Position Statement
- Recognition
- Study

RESOLUTION ACTION AGENCY (check any option that applies):

- WACD
- WSCC
- OTHER STATE AGENCY _____ FSA _____
- NRCS
- NACD

- NON-STATE/FEDERAL PARTNER _____

BACKGROUND/PROBLEM STATEMENT:

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program CREP are voluntary land retirement programs that help agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, create, and restore habitat for wildlife and safeguard ground and surface water. With the help of USDA Farm Services Agency (FSA), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS; as a Technical Service Provider) CRP and CREP have been valuable and successful programs. When the FSA makes a mistake (technical or other) on a signed CRP or CREP contract that has been put into practice, they cannot cancel the contract without just compensation or a comparable "fix" for the producer(s) listed on the contract. They also must notify other agencies about the mistake so there are no surprises to any party that may be involved in any manner. These "mistakes" by FSA have created a disconnection between landowners/producers and State and Federal Government. Consequently, many landowners are now choosing not to participate in the CRP and/or CREP program or renew their contracts as they see FSA as being unreliable and unaccountable for their actions. This decreases the amount of environmentally sensitive land available for conservation programs and also decreases critical wildlife habitat, which in turn increases erosion and water quality issues.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION LANGUAGE:



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

When a mistake is made on a signed CRP or CREP contract, and the mistake is due to the FSA's negligence, the FSA must fulfill the contract length or compensate the producer for the value of the contract if the contract is cancelled by the FSA or pay any costs associated with bringing it into program compliance if it is not cancelled and brought into compliance.

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- New policy.

ARE WACD RESOURCES (FUNDING, STAFF CAPACITY, ETC.) REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY?

NO

YES (briefly explain): Possibly utilize WACD staff to help with negotiation of revision to FSA policy.



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

RESOLUTION 2023-23

RESOLUTION TITLE: Gaining CD Eligibility for RCO Land Acquisition Grants
SPONSORING ENTITY/IES CD(s): EKCD
AREA: <input type="checkbox"/> NW <input type="checkbox"/> SW <input type="checkbox"/> NC <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SC <input type="checkbox"/> NE <input type="checkbox"/> SE
RESOLUTION TYPE: <input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Position Statement <input type="checkbox"/> Recognition <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Study
RESOLUTION ACTION AGENCY (check any option that applies): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WACD <input type="checkbox"/> WSCC <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER STATE AGENCY _____ <input type="checkbox"/> NRCS <input type="checkbox"/> NACD (See Page 2) <input type="checkbox"/> NON-STATE/FEDERAL PARTNER _____
TYPE OF TEXT OF RESOLUTION (check all boxes that apply): <input type="checkbox"/> Technical (changes address grammar, punctuation, sentence flow and makes NO substantive change(s) to the existing policy. <input type="checkbox"/> Substantive change to existing policy. If in doubt, check the box. <input type="checkbox"/> New policy.
BACKGROUND DESCRIBING THE ISSUE/PROBLEM STATEMENT: Natural resources are increasingly being acquired by state and non-profit entities and structures like community forests. Locally led conservation districts are the go-to resource for grass roots conservation of natural resources. Conservation Districts have the technical capability to assist landowners with management, restoration, and conservation of natural resources. Conservation Districts could be a valued resource for communities looking to conserve lands through public ownership while retaining the ability to manage the land locally, but conservation districts are not eligible for the primary source of land acquisition grants through the Washington Recreation and Conservation Offices' Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program. This leaves little opportunity for locally led public lands acquisition and communities must work through state agencies to try to have influence on local public lands management. This can be an expensive and time consuming process with uncertain outcomes.
PROPOSED RESOLUTION LANGUAGE: WACD shall work with CD's, RCO and legislators to develop legislative language to change RCO's WWRP eligibility requirements to include CD in the list of eligible grant applicants. WACD shall report back to



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

WACD members with a strategy to accomplish the eligibility changes by April 30, 2024 with a goal to implement the change by July 1, 2025

IS THERE A WACD FINANCIAL IMPLICATION TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY? (Funding required, staff time, etc.)

NO

YES (briefly explain):



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

RESOLUTION 2023-24

RESOLUTION TITLE: Washington State Coastal Marine Resources Committees Administration Change

SPONSORING ENTITY/IES CD(s): Pacific Conservation District

AREA: NW SW NC SC NE SE

RESOLUTION TYPE:

- Policy
- Position Statement
- Recognition
- Study

RESOLUTION ACTION AGENCY (check any option that applies):

- WACD
- WSCC
- OTHER STATE AGENCY WDFW
- NRCS
- NACD (See Page 2)
- NON-STATE/FEDERAL PARTNER Coastal Counties-Wahkiakum, Pacific, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, and Clallam

TYPE OF TEXT OF RESOLUTION (check all boxes that apply):

- Technical (changes address grammar, punctuation, sentence flow and makes **NO** substantive change(s) to the existing policy.
- Substantive change to existing policy. If in doubt, check the box.
- New policy.

BACKGROUND DESCRIBING THE ISSUE/PROBLEM STATEMENT:

Washington's Coastal MRC's have been in existence for 13 years under WDFW administration through RCW "", how ever WDFW has not advocated for an increase in funding, either operational or implementation, since the MRC's inception. Secondly, the contracting for the MRC's through WDFW have been very slow and cumbersome.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION LANGUAGE:

WACD will work with SCC staff, the legislature, and WDFW to mover the administration and advocacy for the Coastal MRC's to the SCC through a change in RCW ""

IS THERE A WACD FINANCIAL IMPLICATION TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY? (Funding required, staff time, etc.)

- NO
- YES (briefly explain): Funding would move from WDFW to SCC, with an increase in funding for the MRC's operational and implementation funds, as well as capacity funds for SCC to administer the program.



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

RESOLUTION 2023-25

SHORT TITLE: CREP Contract Communication and Payment Inconsistency

SPONSOR CD: Columbia Conservation District

AREA: NW SW NC SC NE SE

RESOLUTION TYPE:

- Policy
- Position Statement
- Recognition
- Study

RESOLUTION ACTION AGENCY (check any option that applies):

- WACD
- WSCC
- OTHER STATE AGENCY _____
- NRCS
- NACD
- NON-STATE/FEDERAL PARTNER USDA Farm Service Agency

BACKGROUND/PROBLEM STATEMENT:

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a voluntary land retirement program that helps agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water. With the help of USDA Farm Services Agency (FSA), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Soil & Water Conservation Districts, CREP has been a valuable and successful program.

In recent years, USDA FSA has proven to be progressively inconsistent and unresponsive in communication and payments to landowners under CREP contracts. Also, FSA has not been timely in issuing payments due to landowners, especially following the initial installation of a BMP(s) installed under a CREP contract. Local producers commonly wait 6-12 months or longer for payment to occur. These issues, among others, have caused hardship for many landowners, damaging FSA's credibility in their administration of the CREP program. Consequently, many landowners are choosing not to participate in the CREP program or renew their contracts as they see FSA as being unreliable and unaccountable for their actions.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION LANGUAGE:

Request WACD work with USDA FSA to review and revise communication and payment policies, to reinforce quality and punctuality of communication and timely payments to landowners.



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TYPE OF TEXT OF RESOLUTION (check all boxes that apply):

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- New policy.

ARE WACD RESOURCES (FUNDING, STAFF CAPACITY, ETC.) REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY?

- NO**
- YES** (briefly explain): This resolution will need to go through NACD to impose change.



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

RESOLUTION 2023-26

SHORT TITLE: Conservation District and WA Dept. Ecology Alignment of Roles and Responsibilities

SPONSOR CD: Mason CD, Stevens County CD and WACD Livestock Committee Members

AREA: NW SW NC SC NE SE

RESOLUTION TYPE:

- Policy
- Position Statement
- Recognition
- Study

RESOLUTION ACTION AGENCY (check any option that applies):

- WACD
- WSCC
- OTHER STATE AGENCY _____
- NRCS
- NACD
- NON-STATE/FEDERAL PARTNER _____

BACKGROUND/PROBLEM STATEMENT:

Both the Conservation Districts (CDs) and the WA Department of Ecology (DOE) address agricultural non-point water quality concerns. The CD/ WSCC champions voluntary actions by landowners and the DOE has regulatory authority to force compliance with regulations. The details of this relationship vary throughout the state depending on how individual CDs and local DOE personnel have established a local process. Generally, DOE responds to complaints or field observations of water quality concerns by referring the landowner to the CD for technical assistance. The CD offers non-regulatory assistance if requested by the landowner. If the landowner chooses not to work with the CD then DOE pursues further enforcement actions as the regulatory agency charged with enforcing water quality law.

Over the past several years this model has been evolving in a way that has jeopardized progress on water quality improvement success, contributes to inefficient use of scarce resources, and confuses landowners. Some challenges include:

- Staff turnover often requires the relationship between CDs and DOE to be revisited. This can take a substantial amount of time to relearn and reexplain how our relationship can operate effectively.
- Duplication of Effort – DOE field staff are out in the community offering to provide technical assistance and funding to implement agricultural BMPs. This is confusing to landowners who generally see District staff as the technical experts. DOE is also competing with CDs for



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

limited funding opportunities to provide this technical assistance.

- Egregious water quality infractions are moving very slowly. This approach of attempting voluntary correction before escalated enforcement action is very valuable and effective. However, some cases need to be remedied immediately. DOE should respond with their regulatory authority quickly when the landowner is not interested in voluntary assistance and cost-share opportunities.
- Clear thresholds and expectations around what constitutes an infraction and what measures are necessary to remedy that infraction are not available. Mixed messaging in communities is causing confusion and apprehension amongst potential cooperators due to the uncertainty around "how much is enough?"
- Expectations have been further complicated by the recent DOE voluntary guidance publications for agricultural best management practices that are related to habitat quality rather than water quality.

A MOU template that addressed the roles of DOE, CDs and the Conservation Commission was developed several decades ago, but many of these MOUs are no longer in place and the template is outdated. Additionally, some of the current issues were not apparent and not addressed in the original MOU template.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION LANGUAGE:

WACD and the Livestock Committee will work with conservation districts and the Washington State Conservation Commission to identify the level of collaboration between Conservation Districts and the Washington Department of Ecology and encourage legislators and/or the Washington Department of Ecology to implement a potential solution to the challenges described above. The solution may be clarification of responsibilities between voluntary and regulatory approaches to water quality goals through legislative action and/or an up-to-date MOU that improves efficiency in meeting water quality objectives.

TYPE OF TEXT OF RESOLUTION (check all boxes that apply):

- Technical (changes address grammar, punctuation, sentence flow and makes **NO** substantive change(s) to the existing policy.
- Substantive change to existing policy. If in doubt, check the box.
- New policy.

ARE WACD RESOURCES (FUNDING, STAFF CAPACITY, ETC.) REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY?

- NO**
- YES** (briefly explain):



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

RESOLUTION 2023-27

RESOLUTION TITLE: RCO SRRF funding moved to SCC

SPONSORING ENTITY/IES CD(s): PCD

AREA: NW SW NC SC NE SE

RESOLUTION TYPE:

- Policy
- Position Statement
- Recognition
- Study

RESOLUTION ACTION AGENCY (check any option that applies):

- WACD
- WSCC
- OTHER STATE AGENCY RCO
- NRCS
- NACD (See Page 2)
- NON-STATE/FEDERAL PARTNER _____

TYPE OF TEXT OF RESOLUTION (check all boxes that apply):

- Technical (changes address grammar, punctuation, sentence flow and makes **NO** substantive change(s) to the existing policy.
- Substantive change to existing policy. If in doubt, check the box.
- New policy.

BACKGROUND DESCRIBING THE ISSUE/PROBLEM STATEMENT:

The 2023 Legislative session mistakenly took 25 million dollars in funding away from the WSCC's 50 Million dollars for Salmon Riparian Funding program and placed it instead in RCO. RCO lacks the apparatus to efficiently implement a riparian program, is less flexible which increases landowner participation, and will turn to RCO's current Manual 18 for fund distribution which 1. Simply processes the funds through RCO's current process (not highlighting riparian restoration) 2. Uses the allocation numbers already in place for Lead Entities (most the money simply goes to Puget Sound which is primarily urban) 3. Does not cover the whole state 4. And includes land acquisition.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION LANGUAGE:

WACD will actively work to have all RCO's Salmon Riparian Restoration Funding moved back to WSCC.

IS THERE A WACD FINANCIAL IMPLICATION TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY? (Funding required, staff time, etc.)

- NO
- YES (briefly explain): RCO dollars to SCC



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

RESOLUTION 2023-28

SHORT TITLE: Dropping population criteria and removing per parcel maximum annual rate under RCW 89.08.405(3)(a)
SPONSOR CD: Pierce Conservation District
AREA: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NW <input type="checkbox"/> SW NC <input type="checkbox"/> SC <input type="checkbox"/> NE <input type="checkbox"/> SE
RESOLUTION TYPE: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Position Statement <input type="checkbox"/> Recognition <input type="checkbox"/> Study
RESOLUTION ACTION AGENCY (check any option that applies): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WACD <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WSCC <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER STATE AGENCY _____ <input type="checkbox"/> NRCS <input type="checkbox"/> NACD <input type="checkbox"/> NON-STATE/FEDERAL PARTNER _____
BACKGROUND/PROBLEM STATEMENT: <p>The system of rates and charges currently states “The maximum annual per parcel rate shall not exceed five dollars, except that for counties with a population of over four hundred eighty thousand persons, the maximum annual per parcel rate shall not exceed ten dollars, and for counties with a population of over one million five hundred thousand persons, the maximum annual per parcel rate shall not exceed fifteen dollars.”</p> <p>As inflation has been on the rise and requests for services has increased many districts large or small struggle to meet the needs of the communities we serve. The current funding structure also puts districts that fall a lower population bracket at a greater funding disadvantage and is limiting for all districts’ capabilities to best serve local constituents.</p>

PROPOSED RESOLUTION LANGUAGE: <p>WACD to work with conservation districts, Washington State Conservation Commission, others, and the legislature in 2024 to change Chapter 89.08 RCW, dropping the population criteria in section 405(3), and removing the maximum annual rate per parcel to allow local jurisdictions to set their own maximum rates.</p>
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WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

TYPE OF TEXT OF RESOLUTION (check all boxes that apply):

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- New policy.

IS THERE A BUDGET IMPLICATION TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY?

- NO**
- YES** (briefly explain): Staff time allocated to legislative issues