

Natural Resource Investments Grant Program



Committee Report to Commissioners

Shana Joy,
District Ops & Regional Manager Coordinator
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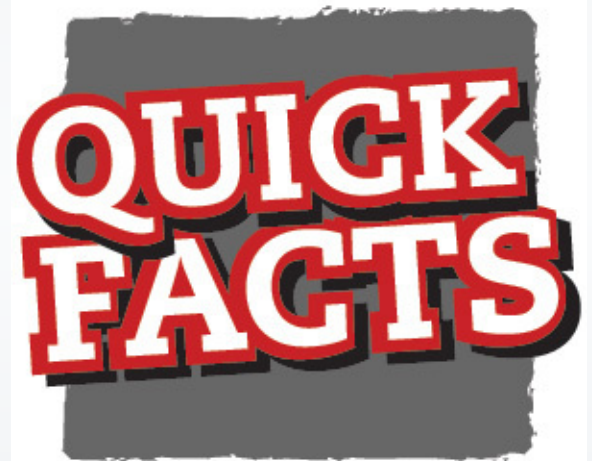
**CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
OF WASHINGTON STATE**
your window to healthy lands

Natural Resource Investments (NRI) Background

- The NRI grant program has been around for several biennia at the SCC – formerly called “non-shellfish”
- Landowner by landowner cost-share projects structure

NRI Grant Basics

- NRI is capital funds appropriated by the legislature
- Granted out to CDs statewide on a project by project basis
- Each ready to go project reviewed by SCC staff prior to funding awards
- Each CD may receive funding for 2 projects per biennium
- SCC cost share contract required for each project – generated by CPDS
- All funds are on a reimbursement basis only – landowner expends funds first
- Rely upon NRCS and SCC-approved practice standards and specifications



**It's time for NRI grants to evolve
to better meet today's
conservation project needs.**

A photograph of three people standing on a grassy hill overlooking a wide river valley. In the foreground, a man on the left wears a grey and yellow jacket and holds a clipboard. A woman in the middle wears a tan jacket and also holds a clipboard. On the right, a man with a beard and sunglasses wears a brown hat and a tan vest over a red plaid shirt. The background shows a large river, a bridge, and distant hills under a cloudy sky.

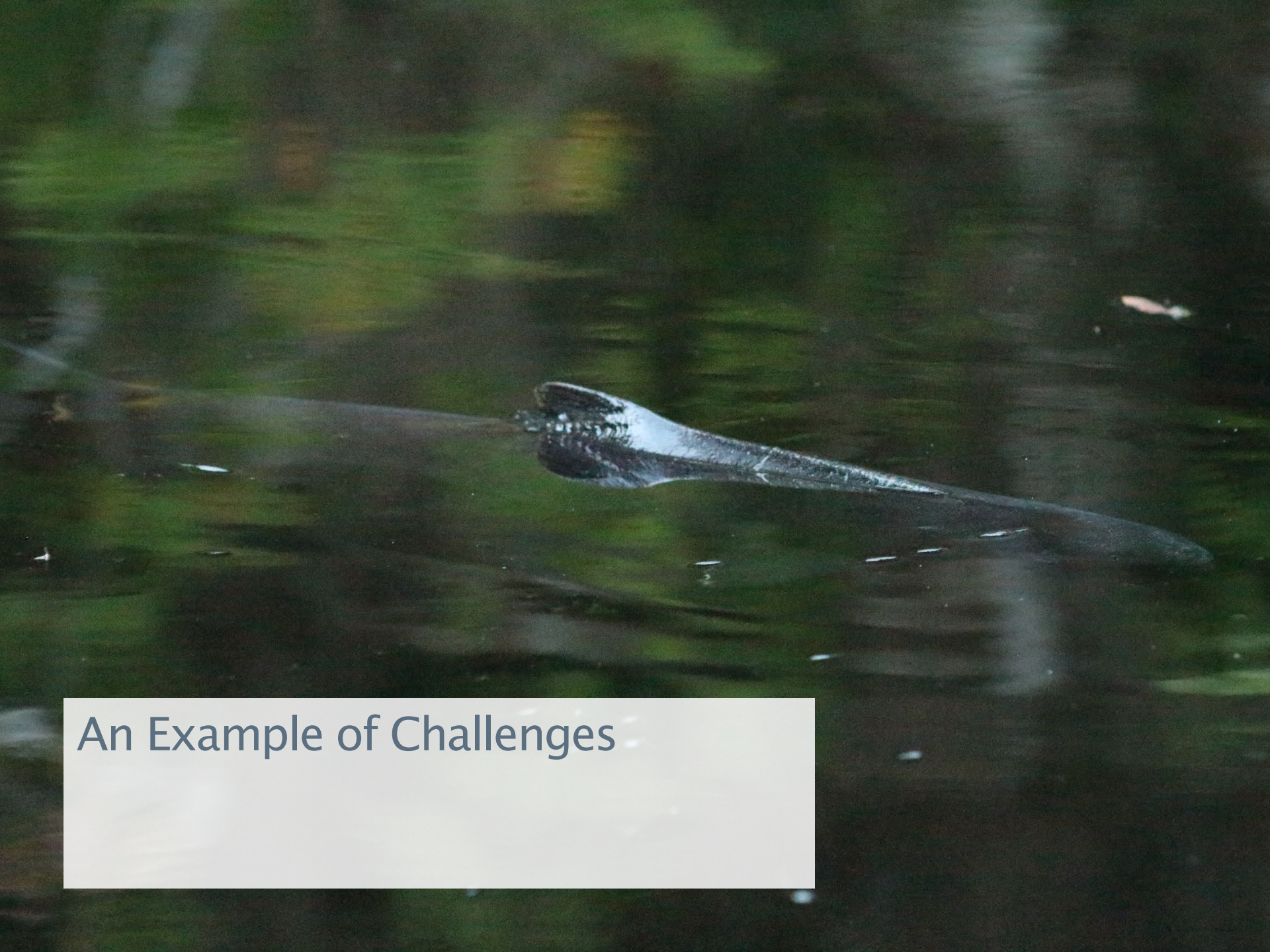
NRI Committee

NRI Committee Members

Member	Organization	Position
Harold Crose	WSCC	Commissioner
Joe Holtrop	Clallam CD	Manager
Elsa Bowen	Lincoln Co. CD	Manager
Megan Stewart	Asotin Co. CD	Manager
Amy Martin	Okanogan CD	Conservation Director
Al Cairns	Jefferson Co. CD	Manager (former)
Zorah Oppenheimer	Clark CD	Manager
Tova Tillinghast	Underwood CD	Manager
Heather Wendt	Benton & Franklin CDs	Assistant Manager
Evan Bauder	Mason CD	Habitat Program Manager
Courtney Woods	WSCC	Grants Manager
Melissa Vander Linden	WSCC	Program Specialist
Josh Giuntoli	WSCC	Regional Manager
Shana Joy	WSCC	Regional Manager Coordinator
Allisa Carlson	WSCC	Regional Manager
Mike Baden	WSCC	Regional Manager
Jean Fike	WSCC	Regional Manager

Challenges

- Changing local priorities
- Larger watershed or community scale projects
- Contractors
- Technical assistance
- Cost share contract

A photograph of a broken wooden stick floating in dark, rippling water. The stick is split in the middle, with the two halves slightly separated. The water is dark green and black, with some light reflecting off the surface. The background is blurred, showing more of the water and some distant light. The overall mood is somber and reflective.

An Example of Challenges



Another Example of Challenges



The Committee's Proposed Changes to NRI

Proposed Changes

- New funding awards structure
- Increased local flexibility for changing priorities
- Technical Assistance
- District Implemented Project (DIP)

District Implemented Project

- CD responsible directly for all aspects of project construction: permitting, bidding and contracting, contractor management, maintenance and monitoring where appropriate
- Not a cost-share structure, no landowner reimbursement by the CD. CD makes expenditures directly.
- New landowner agreement template optional for CD use. CD must complete, and provide to SCC, an agreement with the landowner(s) for each DIP completed but structure of agreement is flexible to best fit the needs of the project.

District Implemented Project - Sample

- Community wildfire resiliency project: chipping material, thinning trees, or pruning throughout a neighborhood
 - Numerous landowners participating
 - Breaking up cost of contractor work by individual landowner is unrealistic
 - Landowner obligation for ongoing maintenance once work completed is minimal
 - Need to work with all landowners in the area – not just those who economic means for cost-share

What Wouldn't Change



NRI Program Oversight



Questions?

Requested Action



Options for Action

- The Commission directs staff to publish the draft NRI programmatic guidelines and landowner agreement template for at least a 30 day review and comment period by conservation districts with the intent that further action will be considered at the May 2021 Commission meeting.
- The Commission determines that the draft NRI programmatic guidelines and landowner agreement template are not ready for review and comment by conservation districts and directs staff to continue working with the NRI Committee.



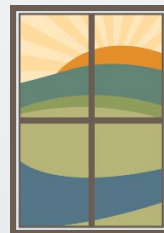
Thank you!

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Washington State
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Commission**



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