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## Regular Business Meeting

The Washington State Conservation Commission (Commission/SCC) met virtually on September 16, 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*  
**Terra Rentz**, *Department of Natural Resources*  
**Sarah Spaeth**, *Governor Appointee*  
**Daryl Williams**, *Governor Appointee*

### COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT

**Carol Smith**, *Executive Director*  
**Mike Baden**, *North Central and Northeast Regional Manager*  
**Allisa Carlson**, *South Central Regional Manager*  
**Stephanie Crouch**, *Administrative Assistant*  
**Bill Eller**, *Voluntary Stewardship Program Coordinator*  
**Jean Fike**, *Puget Sound Regional Manager*  
**Lori Gonzalez**, *Executive Assistant*  
**Josh Giuntoli**, *Southwest Regional Manager*  
**Sarah Groth**, *Fiscal Manager*  
**Alison Halpern**, *Policy Assistant*  
**Karla Heinitz**, *Contracts Manager*  
**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*  
**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.

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## Consent Agenda (Action)

*Draft July 15, 2021 meeting minutes*

**Motion by Commissioner Crose to approve the July 15, 2021 meeting minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Cochran. Motion carries.**

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## District Operations (Action)

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*2022 Commission Meeting Locations*

Chairman Longrie welcomes Shana Joy, SCC Regional Manager Coordinator to share the next agenda item related to District Operations. Ms. Joy explains that If in-person Commission meetings are possible in 2022, the Regional Managers propose to offer the opportunity to host those meetings to the conservation districts noted in Table 1. Additionally, in the event that a Commission meeting is conducted in a remote format only, Regional Managers propose to work with other SCC staff and conservation districts to bring either a virtual district tour or a topical presentation(s) to that Commission meeting to continue providing an opportunity to hear from the districts about successes, innovations, and challenges that we would otherwise have an opportunity to learn about on the tours hosted by the districts.

***Motion by Commissioner Williams to approve the proposed 2022 meeting dates and potential locations (listed below) in the event that in-person Commission meeting(s) are possible. Seconded by Commissioner Crose. Motion carries.***

<i><b>Date</b></i>	<i><b>Hosting District</b></i>	<i><b>Location</b></i>
January 19 & 20, 2022	Snohomish CD	Everett / Edmonds
March 16 & 17, 2022	Thurston CD	Olympia / Lacey
May 17, 18, & 19, 2022	Lincoln CD	Davenport / Spokane
July 20 & 21, 2022	Kittitas County CD	Ellensburg
September 14 & 15, 2022	Pacific CD	Long Beach / Other TBD
December 1, 2022	WACD Annual Meeting	TBD

#### *Cultural Resources Policy Update*

Chairman Longrie welcomes Jean Fike, SCC Puget Sound Regional Manager, to present on the Cultural Resources Policy Update. Ms. Fike shares 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.

***Motion by Commissioner Cochran to approve the policy and procedure changes as presented (meeting packet pages 20-22), effective immediately. Seconded by Commissioner Giglio. Motion carries.***

#### *Benton CD Mid-term Supervisor Appointment*

Chairman Longrie welcomes Commissioner Crose to begin presentation on the mid-term supervisor appointment to the Benton CD board. Commissioner Crose shares that the SCC received one application for a mid-term appointment on the Benton Conservation District Board of Supervisors. All applications received after the annual March 31st deadline for full term appointment, will now be processed as a mid-term until next year's cycle.

The application was sent to all Commission members for their review prior to the September 16th business meeting. Commissioners and Commission staff followed the process adopted in March of

2018 to conduct a more comprehensive vetting of the applications received for Commission appointment including conducting an interview with the candidate listed below and contacting references.

***Motion by Commissioner Crose to appoint Bridget Gallant to the Benton Conservation District board of supervisors. Seconded by Commissioner Beale. Motion carries.***

*Certification of Palouse CD's September 13, 2021 election*

Chairman Longrie invites Bill Eller, SCC VSP Coordinator, to begin presentation on the next agenda item. Mr. Eller explains that on February 9, 2021, the PCD held an election. Due to an error, fewer than two polling officers were present when the sole ballot was processed. As a result, the Commission declined to certify the February PCD election at its regular meeting on March 18, 2021.

PCD then went to Superior Court in Whitman County and the court invalidated the February election and ordered another election to be held. This was necessary because neither PCD 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. PCD held this second election on September 13, 2021. There were 15 ballots returned and all voted for Jacob Smith. There were no errors during this second election.

***Motion by Commissioner Beale to certify Palouse Conservation District's September 13, 2021 election, and announce that Jacob Smith was the winner of this election. Seconded by Commissioner Williams. Commissioner Cochran abstains. Motion carries.***

*Report and Recommendations from the Joint Committee on Elections*

Chairman Longrie welcomes Laura Meyer, SCC Communications Manager, Ron Shultz, SCC Policy Director, and Mark Craven, Chairman of the Joint Committee on Elections, to begin presenting on the recommendations from the committee. Mr. Craven begins by providing background on the committee, sharing that In 2019, there was increasing awareness in the Legislature and in the general public about the way special purpose districts ran elections, including conservation district elections. During the 2019 Legislative Session, bills were introduced to modify conservation district elections by placing them on the general election ballot. These bills did not pass.

Following the Legislative Session, staff from the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) and the Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) met to discuss possible election reforms. The SCC conducted a survey of districts to gather feedback on potential reforms. Results indicated a wide divide in perspectives. At their December 2019 meeting, Commission members committed to continuing to explore election reforms. This exploration continued into 2020, including two all-district webinars to discuss election reforms in the late summer and fall.

At their December 2020 meeting, the Commission was presented with several recommendations with no requested action. The Commission passed a motion to establish a more formal process and committee for the SCC, WACD, and districts to review the election issue and developing recommendations. The SCC and WACD formed the Joint Committee on Elections (JCE) in early 2021, which met through the spring and summer of 2021 to discuss district elections and identify recommended reforms.

The recommended actions are fully described in the report (meeting packet pages 72-82). They are:

Part 1: Conduct elections every other year, rather than every year as done currently.

*Currently, all conservation districts conduct elections every year. This proposal would move elections to every other year.*

*Why propose this change?*

*Saves costs associated with conducting an election.*

*Gives districts the option of choosing to run their election in either an odd or an even year.*

Part 2: Extend supervisor terms (for both appointed and elected) from the current three-year term to a four-year term.

*When this proposal was presented to conservation districts, the option was for either a 4-year term, or a 6-year term. Most responders felt the 4-year term would be most appropriate. Some commenters noted a 6-year term would be too long of a commitment for a voluntary board member. For current supervisors, there will be a process to modify the three-year term to a four-year term.*

*- With a four-year term, two supervisor positions would be up for election during one election cycle, and one supervisor position would be elected in the next cycle two year later.*

*- Under the four-year term, the two appointed supervisor positions would be appointed by the Commission in “off years” when no election is held.*

*Why propose this change?*

*Reduces election costs.*

*Normalizes CD elections to match terms of several other elected positions.*

*Allows CDs to follow same schedules as other elections.*

Part 3: Conduct district elections during one Conservation Month.

*Districts follow the current election process but with more emphasis on local election outreach. All districts would conduct their election during one “Conservation Month”, with the Commission determining the month. The SCC would coordinate broad statewide advertising/promotion of conservation districts and potential election opportunities throughout Conservation Month. The campaign will be developed in coordination with CDs, particularly with members of the Communications, Partnership, and Outreach group who have been building a foundation for this.*

*Why propose this change?*

*Focusing the election in a Conservation Month would allow for broad communication and publicity of CDs and their work to a statewide audience.*

*Goal would be to increase awareness of CDs and increase participation in CD elections.*

*Cost of the “Conservation Month” publicity would be borne by the Commission.*

Part 4: Allow conservation districts the option to go on the general election ballot.

- By a vote of the board of supervisors, a CD could choose to go on the general election ballot, rather than conduct the election under the current process.*
- CD supervisors would not be required to run in a primary election, and — similar to cemetery districts, supervisors would be exempt from Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) and personal financial filing requirements.*

*Why propose this change?*

*Empowers each CD to make a local determination about which election approach works best for their communities and their district, consistent with our core value of locally led conservation.*

*This option has the highest potential to increase voter turnout because it would be on the ballot with other entities.*

***Motion by Commissioner Cochran to approve all four parts of the recommendation from the Joint Committee on Elections (listed below). Seconded by Commissioner Crose. Motion carries.***

*Part 1: Conduct elections every other year, rather than every year as done currently.*

*Part 2: Extend supervisor terms (for both appointed and elected) from the current three-year term to a four-year term.*

*Part 3: Conduct district elections during one Conservation Month.*

*Part 4: Allow conservation districts the option to go on the general election ballot.*

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## Commission Operations (Action)

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### *Governance Sub-Committee Report*

Chairman Longrie welcomes back Shana Joy to present on the Governance Sub-Committee report. As SCC staff have been working over the last year to review existing agency policies and fill policy gaps, governance was identified as a gap in their policies. In December 2020, Commissioners appointed and tasked the Governance Sub-Committee to “craft governance policies for the State Conservation Commission by the end of calendar year 2021.”

The Committee has met five times to date to make progress on this task and introduced a draft Governance and Commissioner Expectations Policy at the July 15th Commission meeting. One comment was shared with the Committee since the policy was introduced. The comment expressed concern about the 2-year term of office for the chair and vice chair. The prior policy prescribed a 1-year term of office. The Committee discussed the concern and decided to retain the 2-year term of office. The corresponding language is yellow-highlighted in the attached policy in the event that Commissioners would like to discuss this point. Additionally, the draft was reviewed with our legal counsel at the Attorney General’s office and minor suggested edits were incorporated into the final document. The Committee requests that Commissioners take action to adopt this policy today. Two additional draft policies are introduced today for Commissioner review and discussion: Commissioner Compensation (an update of current policy) and Commission Meetings (new policy).

Two additional draft policies are introduced today for Commissioner review and discussion: Commissioner Compensation (an update of current policy) and Commission Meetings (new policy). Review of these two additional drafts by all staff and the Attorney General’s office will be conducted prior to the December 2nd Commission meeting. It is anticipated that the Committee will request action to adopt these two policies at the December 2nd Commission meeting which will complete the task they were asked to do.

***Motion by Commissioner Rentz to adopt the “Governor and Commissioner Expectations” policy as presented (meeting packet pages 40-43). Seconded by Commissioner Spaeth. Motion carries.***

### *Area Member Election Process for 2021*

Chairman Longrie welcomes back Ron Shultz to present on the Area Member Election Process for 2021. Mr. Shultz shares that because the Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD)

will be holding their 2021 annual meeting via a hybrid style, with in-person and options to participate online, the Commission will need to change the existing Interpretive Statement (IS) regarding the process of electing the elected position to the Conservation Commission. In 2013 the Commission adopted an interpretive statement to clarify the process for election of the elected representatives on the Commission. The state statute indicates the timing of the election, establishes the district areas for representation, and how vacancies are filled. What was unclear was how the election was to be conducted. The Commission clarified this in the interpretive statement.

The interpretive statement establishes the election is to be held during the WACD annual meeting, how candidates are to provide notice of their candidacy, how the Commission will distribute candidate information for supervisor consideration, and how the election itself will be conducted during the WACD annual meeting.

The problem is, all of this was developed with the expectation that the WACD annual meeting would be held in-person. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the annual meeting this year will be held via a hybrid style with in-person and options to participate online. Because of this, there is a need to provide for a temporary interpretive statement to cover this unique situation. The attached draft temporary interpretive statement will accomplish this purpose. It should be noted that the temporary interpretive statement expires December 31, 2021.

***Motion by Commissioner Crose to approve a temporary interpretive statement, which describes the process for electing the elected position to the Conservation Commission, limited to the 2021 election. Seconded by Commissioner Williams. Motion carries.***

*SCC Interim Executive Director – Approve*

Chairman Longrie shares that the Executive Director search committee has talked to and is recommending that Kirk Robinson be appointed as the interim director of the SCC. Mr. Robinson was the previous interim director and did a wonderful job, and the search committee has full confidence in appointing him as the interim director. He would begin on October 18, 2021.

***Motion by Chairman Longrie to approve Kirk Robinson as the interim Executive Director of the Washington State Conservation Commission. Seconded by Commissioner Beale. Motion carries.***

*2022-27 Strategic Plan – Stakeholder Feedback*

Chairman Longrie welcomes Laura Meyer to present on the 2022-27 Strategic Plan. Ms. Meyer shares that on July 9, SCC staff sent a request for feedback on our 2022-2027 priority areas and goals to a list of stakeholders, including all conservation districts and several external partners familiar with our work. Stakeholders used an electronic form to submit their comments, which were due August 16.

The staff teams who have been developing each of the five priority areas met to discuss the comments received in their area. For each comment they considered a) whether revisions/additions were needed to goals, and b) if/how the feedback could be incorporated as we build out the objectives, strategies, and tactics under each goal (as applicable).

The majority of stakeholder comments reference specific actions respondents would like to see in our strategic plan. SCC staff will consider and incorporate these actions as we build out our objectives, strategies, and tactics underneath each goal, as appropriate.

Stakeholder feedback helped us identify one important area of SCC/CD work that's missing from our current goals. We specifically call out wildfire resiliency in Goal V under Climate Resiliency, but the goal is too narrow to capture other preparedness and recovery work done for climate-related hazards, such as flood and drought. Staff recommend revising the goal to correct this.

***Motion by Commissioner Giglio to move forward with the current approved goals, revising Goal V under the Climate Resiliency priority area (modified language below). Seconded by Commissioner Williams. Motion carries.***

*“Strengthen the ability of our natural and working landscapes and communities to prepare for and respond to drought, wildfire, flood, and other climate-related hazards.”*

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## Policy & Programs (Action)

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### *Rulemaking Process Approval for Public Records*

Chairman Longrie welcomes back Ron Shultz to begin presenting on the next two agenda items. Mr. Shultz explains that pursuant to RCW 42.56.030 all state agencies must currently publish in the state Washington Administrative Code (WAC):

- a) Descriptions of its central and field organization and the established places at which, the employees from whom, and the methods whereby, the public may obtain information, make submittals or requests, or obtain copies of agency decisions;
- b) Statements of the general course and method by which its operations are channeled and determined, including the nature and requirements of all formal and informal procedures available;
- c) Rules of procedure;
- d) Substantive rules of general applicability adopted as authorized by law, and statements of general policy or interpretations of general applicability formulated and adopted by the agency; and
- e) Each amendment or revision to, or repeal of any of the foregoing.

The Conservation Commission has no such rules in the agency WACs. The purpose of this request is for the Commission to approve Commission staff to proceed with rulemaking to comply with this statutory requirement.

Although there is a template for such rules for agencies to use, most agencies will vary from the template to meet their agency's particular needs. For example, the Washington Department of Agriculture (WSDA) rule includes a section on records statutorily exempt from disclosure. We will include a similar section in our rule.

It is not necessary for the Commission to approve the draft rule language at this time. Only to approve submittal of the appropriate paperwork to the code reviser's office to begin the process. The Commission will have the opportunity to review the rule at a later date, and will give final approval to the rule after a public hearing has been held.

***Rulemaking Process:*** If the Commission approves the initiation of the rulemaking process for agency rules relating to public records requests, Commission staff will file the CR-101 with the state Code Reviser to begin the rulemaking process. This document is a statement of the agency's intent to initiate rules on a topic. Following this, Commission staff will work with staff from the Code Reviser's Office to finalize the rule language. We will then file a CR-102, which includes the proposed rule language and specifies the date(s) and process for public review and comment, including a public hearing. Following receipt of comments, Commission staff will finalize the draft rule and submit it to



the Commission for final approval. Once approval is received, staff will file a CR-103 with the Code Reviser for final inclusion in the agency's rules.

***Motion by Commissioner Williams to approve staff to proceed with the rulemaking process for agency rules relating to public records requests. Seconded by Commissioner Giglio. Motion carries.***

#### *Rulemaking Process Approval for Public Records*

Mr. Shultz continues to share that The Conservation Commission has statutory authority to remove a conservation district supervisor in a narrow set of circumstances. According to statute, "a supervisor may be removed by the state conservation commission upon notice and hearing, for neglect of duty or malfeasance in office, but for no other reason." RCW 89.08.200. There is no other statutory language providing guidance on what the notice process is to be, or how such a hearing is to be conducted. The Commission currently has no policy or rule on how these matters are to be undertaken.

In 2018, following receipt of complaints regarding the conduct of certain supervisors at the Thurston Conservation District, the Commission initiated an investigation process to determine if the complaints had merit to consider potential removal of the supervisors. Following the results of the investigation, and because the Commission has no rule or process for the statutory requirement for a hearing before removal, the Commission consulted their Assistant Attorney General and developed a process for conduct of the hearing for potential removal. The process was developed and the hearing was conducted. The subject supervisors contested the format of the hearing.

Following action by the Commission to remove the two supervisors, the subject supervisors appealed the decision based on the process used. The case started at Thurston County Superior Court and ultimately reached the State District Court. The District Court issued its decision on February 9, 2021. This decision was appealed to the State Supreme Court, who denied hearing the appeal on June 7, 2021 the Supreme Court denied review, effectively ending appeals in the case.

The decision of the Court of Appeals still stands. In that decision, the court faulted the Commission for failing to follow the appropriate process consistent with the state Administrative Procedures Act (APA). However, the process used by the Commission did not deprive the supervisors of their rights; therefore, there was no harm in the result.

Through this memo, Commission staff request the Commission's approval to begin the rulemaking process for such a rule. The APA rule for hearing and action upon the hearing findings is a template rule prepared by the Office of Administrative Hearings. These rules are consistent with the state APA statute which states: "Each agency shall adopt as much of the model rules as is reasonable under its circumstances." RCW 34.05.250. Adoption of these rules is also consistent with advise from our Assistant Attorney General that, to be responsive to the Court of Appeals decision relating to the conduct of the hearing, the Commission should adopt rules.

It should be noted; the proposed rules are only part of the policy for reviewing complaints against conservation district supervisors. There is a policy currently under development for how such complaints will be handled in an initial review phase to determine merit. The Commission will be presented with this policy for review at a later date. The policy under development and this proposed rule will form one complete package for Commission review. Because the timeline for rulemaking can be long, they are requesting approval to begin the rulemaking process now so that the rule and the policy can proceed in tandem.



*Rulemaking process:* If the Commission approves the initiation of the rulemaking process for agency rules relating to public records requests, Commission staff will file the CR-101 with the state Code Reviser to begin the rulemaking process. This document is a statement of the agency's intent to initiate rules on a topic. Following this, Commission staff will work with staff from the Code Reviser's Office to finalize the rule language. We will then file a CR-102, which includes the proposed rule language and specifies the date(s) and process for public review and comment, including a public hearing. Following receipt of comments, Commission staff will finalize the draft rule and submit it to the Commission for final approval. Once approval is received, staff will file a CR-103 with the Code Reviser for final inclusion in the agency's rules.

***Motion by Commissioner Williams to approve staff to proceed with the rulemaking process for hearings relating to investigations and removal of a conservation district supervisor.  
Seconded by Commissioner Dorner. Motion carries.***

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## Budget (Information)

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### *Fiscal Year 22 & Biennium 19-21 close update*

Chairman Longrie welcomes Sarah Groth, SCC Fiscal Manager, to present on the next agenda items. Ms. Groth shares that SCC recently completed the closing of their fiscal year 22 and Biennium 19-21 financials and reports in compliance with OFM's deadlines. SCC finance staff processed over 550 vouchers for over \$8,500,000 in reimbursements to districts, counties and contractors from June 1, 2021 - August 15, 2021.

Overall, SCC is returning a very small amount in operating funding, approximately \$646,915 out of \$16,952,000, or just under 4%. Given the uncertainty that continued into fiscal year 2022, districts, Regional Managers and fiscal staff worked hard, and were in frequent contact about the status of projects and funding balances to ensure the least of amount of funding was returned.

For their capital programs, they have a large enough re-appropriated balances to be to have all capital funds qualify for re-appropriation, meaning they will not be returning any capital funding. For some perspective, in biennium 17-19 SCC returned approximately 8.5% in operating funds and approximately 0.5% in capital funds.

SCC financial staff will continue to closely monitor all budgets and appropriations and will continue to provide reports and updates to support program staff, Regional Managers, Executive Director and staff to ensure we utilizing the funding in accordance with state and federal laws, and all programmatic guidelines.

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## District Operations (Information)

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### *District Operations Report*

Chairman Longrie welcomes Josh Giuntoli, SCC Southwest Regional Manager, to present the District Operations Report. Mr. Giuntoli shares that recently, the RM team has assisted with partnering or participated in partner and relationship building ongoing efforts with: individual conservation districts, WADE, Center for Technical Development, WACD, DNR, NRCS, Ecology, NASCA, WDFW, NACD, Washington Association of Land Trusts, State Auditor's Office, RCO, Department of Veterans Affairs, WA Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network, Washington Conservation Society, and Arid Lands Initiative.

Mike Baden, Allisa Carlson, and Courtney Woods are administering the wildfire recovery grant program by regularly reviewing applications for technical assistance and cost-share project funding needs. As of September 1, \$917,533 worth of funds have been awarded to conservation districts. The SCC also provided a letter of sponsorship for the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) to NRCS to support assessment work to determine if eligible projects exist in the areas burned by this summer's wildfires.

Mike Baden is leading implementation of a Hazard Mitigation Grant that the SCC is receiving from the Department of Emergency Management. He has been working with the National Fire Protection Association to schedule the final three Home Ignition Zone Assessment trainings for the fall. Initial work has started with the Lincoln County CD on organizing the final "Outreach Strategies for Community Wildfire Preparedness and Recovery" training. This training is planned to occur in early February 2022.

16 districts were written into the grant proposal to conduct a target of 10 home ignition zone assessments if they attended one of the Home Ignition Zone assessment trainings. This work was intended as a practical follow-up to practice what they were taught during the training. Funding has also been provided to 11 of those districts that attended one of the spring trainings. 5 more districts were included in the grant that would be able to conduct this work after successfully completing one of the fall Home Ignition Zone trainings.

Allisa Carlson and Shana Joy are participating on a steering committee with WDFW and DNR staff to implement a shrubsteppe habitat wildfire recovery and resiliency budget proviso that was appropriated to WDFW in this new biennium. The steering committee conducted a kick-off meeting with invited partners and stakeholders on August 31st to provide information about the proviso, planned near term actions to occur in fall of 2021, and opportunities for engagement including crafting a collaborate strategy for long term wildfire resiliency in the shrub steppe. The Foster Creek and Lincoln County Conservation Districts have been participating in the ongoing discussions as the near term actions work will focus primarily in the footprints of the Pearl Hill and Whitney Fires of 2020. Allisa is also plugging into the work of two of the near term action technical workgroups identified to provide recommendations to the steering committee on wildlife friendly fencing and hay for deferred grazing.

Mr. Giuntoli represents the Executive Director of the Commission as an ex-officio member of the Chehalis Basin Board (CBB). Since the last report, the Office of Chehalis Basin (OCB) approved a budget of \$70m for aquatic and flood work in the Chehalis Basin. Budget approval was initially delayed as certain details on the flood side of funding were reconciled between interested parties. Mostly it was how funding was being obligated for elements of the flood retention facility that were seen as going beyond the SEPA and NEPA process. At the August 16 board meeting, 7 of 7 voting members approved the funding plan. As the proposed flood retention facility progresses through the SEPA and NEPA process, the CBB approved a structure to begin evaluating alternatives to the proposed project. This structure would include creating a newly chartered Local Actions Non-Dam (LAND) Alternative Advisory Group which would serve in an advisory capacity on technical, policy, and/or implementation feasibility issues while a third-party consultant team develops options for a non-dam alternative.

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 with private landowners and partners. Construction on projects in this current in-stream work window are well underway. An example is that Lewis CD is seeing great progress with a project on private land in the upper Chehalis Basin. In partnership with Weyerhaeuser Company,

Lewis CD sponsored this river restoration project to open seven miles of previously isolated stream habitat for salmon and steelhead. Construction to remove a fish passage barrier on the West Fork Chehalis River is well underway and will be completed soon.

Josh continues to convene a monthly meeting of Chehalis Basin CDs and partners (lead entity, Office of Chehalis Basin, WDFW, and others) to provide direct updates and collaboration with each other on work and activity in the Basin.