



Washington State  
Conservation District

# Supervisor Reference

Updated: June 2023



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# Welcome to the Conservation Family!

*We're excited you're here.*

Either your fellow community members or the Washington State Conservation Commission selected you to serve in one of the 225 conservation district supervisor positions available on the 45 conservation districts in Washington State.

Congratulations on achieving this honor. You're part of a proud, decades-long history of conservation work in Washington State that's made possible through the dedication of women and men who serve as conservation district supervisors.

We're in this together. Please call your regional manager if you have questions or need support.

Thank you for your service!



**Washington State  
Conservation Commission**



attend the regularly scheduled conservation district board meetings as well as committee and other special meetings, such as the Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) Area and Annual Meetings in the fall.

A minimum time commitment is approximately 20 days/year.

## **SUPERVISOR ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- ▶ Identify local conservation needs, oversee implementation, and evaluate programs and services to meet those needs.
- ▶ Educate and inform landowners and community members within the conservation district as well as local, state, tribal, and federal partners on conservation issues and programs.
- ▶ Supervise paid staff and other volunteers working with the conservation district; coordinate with any cooperating agency personnel.
- ▶ Administer the conservation district by delegating tasks through a structure of board officers, members, committees, manager, and staff.
- ▶ Manage and seek revenue to implement conservation needs and report on activities to the community within the conservation district boundaries.
- ▶ Coordinate assistance and funding from federal, state, tribal, and local government; conservation district associations; and private groups.

- Set board governance and conservation district operations policies.

Specific powers and duties of conservation district supervisors are described in state law ([RCW 89.08.210](#)), which reads as follows:

*“District supervisors may employ a secretary, treasurer, technical experts, and such other officers, agents, and employees, permanent and temporary, as they may require, and determine their qualifications, duties, and compensation. It may call upon the attorney general for legal services, or may employ its own counsel and legal staff. The supervisors may delegate to their chairman, to one or more supervisors, or to one or more agents or employees such powers and duties as it deems proper. The supervisors shall furnish to the commission, upon request, copies of such internal rules, regulations, orders, contracts, forms, and other documents as they shall adopt or employ, and such other information concerning their activities as the commission may require in the performance of its duties under chapter 184, Laws of 1973 1st ex. sess. The supervisors shall provide for the execution of surety bonds for officers and all employees who shall be entrusted with funds or property.*

*The supervisors shall provide for the keeping of a full and accurate record of all proceedings, resolutions, regulations, and orders issued or adopted. The supervisors shall provide for an annual audit of the accounts of receipts and disbursements in accordance with procedures prescribed by regulations of the commission.*

*The board may invite the legislative body of any municipality or county near or within the district, to designate a representative to advise and consult with*

*it on all questions of program and policy which may affect the property, water supply, or other interests of such municipality or county. The governing body of a district shall appoint such advisory committees as may be needed to assure the availability of appropriate channels of communication to the board of supervisors, to persons affected by district operations, and to local, regional, state and interstate special-purpose districts and agencies responsible for community planning, zoning, or other resource development activities. The district shall keep such committees informed of its work, and such advisory committees shall submit recommendations from time to time to the board of supervisors."*

**BENEFITS OF BEING A SUPERVISOR**

- ▶ Satisfaction in seeing natural resource conservation practices applied in the community.
- ▶ Interaction with others interested in natural resource conservation.
- ▶ Direct input into local, state, and federal conservation programs.
- ▶ Training through:
  - [Washington State Conservation Commission](#)
  - [Washington Association of Conservation Districts](#)
  - [National Association of Conservation Districts](#)
  - [Municipal Research and Services Center](#)
  - [Enduris](#)





# Conservation District Basics

## WHAT IS A CONSERVATION DISTRICT?

Conservation districts are governmental subdivisions of the state that work with private landowners — who own over 50 percent of the land in our state — to voluntarily take action to keep our air, water, soil, and other natural resources healthy. They're community-based hubs of expertise and funding led and staffed by locals who understand the needs of landscapes and fellow community-members that they serve.

## FUNCTION OF A CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Conservation districts take available technical, financial and education resources, regardless of the source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land user for conservation of soil, water, and related resources. (Adapted from Dr. Peter Nowak's presentation "The Conservation District Official: Villain or Victim?")

## HISTORY OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

During the 1930s, the [Dust Bowl](#) made the need to conserve natural resources, particularly soil, very clear. Agencies from Land Grant Universities to the Federal Emergency Relief Administration researched and implemented conservation practices throughout the nation.

Eventually, the work of people like [Hugh Hammond Bennett](#) led to the adoption of the Soil Conservation Act of 1935 to develop and implement soil erosion control programs and the creation of the [Soil Conservation Service](#), which is now called the [USDA](#)

## Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Local leadership was needed to coordinate soil erosion control programs and tie them to local conditions and priorities. USDA developed a Standard State Soil Conservation District Law for consideration by state governments.

In 1939, the Washington State Legislature passed RCW 89.08 authorizing the creation of conservation districts and the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC). It defines conservation districts as able to direct programs protecting local renewable natural resources.

Today, there are 45 conservation districts in Washington.

## **BASIC PRINCIPLES OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

- ▶ Conservation efforts should be led by local people.
- ▶ Conservation districts work where private land ownership and natural resources intersect.
- ▶ Final responsibility for conservation lies with the landowner.
- ▶ Landowners have legitimate operating goals.
- ▶ Conservation districts are responsible to landowners and the community as a whole.
- ▶ Every parcel of land located within a conservation district's boundary is eligible to receive service from a conservation district.

## STRUCTURE OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS AND OPEN GOVERNMENT LAWS

Conservation districts are subdivisions of state government, much like school districts. You also will hear conservation districts referred to as local government.

Each conservation district is governed by a board of five supervisors. Supervisors are local residents who serve voluntarily without pay. Three are elected by local voters, and two are appointed by the Commission. Supervisors may come from many different occupations, but — by law — three of the five supervisors must be landowners or farm operators.

As a governmental entity, conservation districts are subject to open government laws, such as the [Open Public Meetings Act \(OPMA\) and Public Records Act \(PRA\)](#).

As a public official, your conduct of conservation district business is also subject to open government laws. All members of governing bodies must complete OPMA and PRA training within **90 days** of assuming duties ([RCW 42.30.205](#) and [RCW 42.56.150](#)).

Refresher Open Government (OPMA and PRA) training is required every four years. SCC will track your training dates and provide reminders for you. For more information, see the Washington State Attorney General's webpage on [Open Government Training](#). Contact your Regional Manager to learn more about receiving this training. The trainings can also be found on the [Commission website](#).

Some important points on where to pay careful

attention while conducting any transactions of conservation district business as a supervisor:

- ▶ **Public Records Act ([RCW 42.56](#))** - Be aware that any conservation district business that is conducted in writing is considered a public record. Writing defined in RCW 42.56.010 includes handwriting, print, photography, and every other means of recording information such as voicemails or video recording. It does not matter whether the record is in digital form (such as an email, text, or social media) or located outside of the jurisdiction's immediate control, if the record pertains "to the conduct of government or the performance of any governmental or proprietary function" it is still a public record subject to retention and disclosure requirements. Please [Municipal Research and Service Center \(MRSC\)'s PRA Basics](#) for helpful information.
- ▶ **Open Public Meetings Act ([RCW 42.30](#))** - The Washington Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) requires that all meetings of governing bodies of public agencies, including cities, counties, and special purpose districts, be open to the public. A "meeting" under the OPMA occurs when a quorum of public officials (conservation district supervisors) gathers with the collective intent of transacting the governing body's business. Note that meetings do not have to be in person to be subject to the OPMA. Meetings can occur by telephone, email, or other electronic media. This could happen inadvertently if a quorum of supervisors engages in conservation district business via email, on the phone, or at the

local restaurant. A quorum of supervisors may gather outside of a board meeting, but must be careful to not discuss conservation district business. To ensure that agency deliberations and other actions are conducted and taken openly, agencies are required under the OPMA to provide sufficient public notice of meetings of their governing bodies. Please see [MRSC's OPMA Basics](#) for helpful information and Practice Tips.

### *From the Attorney General's Office*

(Visit the [Open Government Training page](#) for more information.) Washington's open government requirements are in state law, including the [Public Records Act \(RCW 42.56\)](#) and the [Open Public Meetings Act \(RCW 42.30\)](#). These are Washington's "sunshine laws." In addition, there are records management and retention laws ([RCW 42.14](#)). Public agencies must have a good command of these laws. Training is key to correct implementation and compliance and is an important risk management tool. It can help establish a "culture of compliance" within an agency. Training can help avoid or reduce litigation and its costs. Violations of the open public records and meetings laws can result in penalties, as well as a breakdown in confidence in government.

### *Open Public Meetings Act ([RCW 42.30.010](#))*

Legislative declaration: *The legislature finds and declares that all public commissions, boards, councils, committees, subcommittees, departments, divisions, offices, and all other public agencies of this state and subdivisions thereof exist to aid in the conduct of the people's business. It is the intent of this chapter that their **actions be taken openly** and that their **deliberations be conducted***

**openly.**

*The people of this state do not yield their sovereignty to the agencies which serve them. The people, in delegating authority, do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know. The people insist on remaining informed so that they may retain control over the instruments they have created.*

### **Public Records Act ([RCW 42.56.010](#))**

(Definitions)

*“Public record” includes any writing containing information relating to the conduct of government or the performance of any governmental or proprietary function prepared, owned, used, or retained by any state or local agency regardless of physical form or characteristics.*

*“Writing” means handwriting, typewriting, printing, photostating, photographing, and every other means of recording any form of communication or representation including, but not limited to, letters, words, pictures, sounds, or symbols, or combination thereof, and all papers, maps, magnetic or paper tapes, photographic films and prints, motion picture, film and video recordings, magnetic or punched cards, discs, drums, diskettes, sound recordings, and other documents including existing data compilations from which information may be obtained or translated.*

## **CONSERVATION DISTRICT LAW**

Conservation District Law — [Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\) 89.08](#) — describes the powers and authorities of conservation districts. This includes, but

is not limited to:

- ▶ Conduct investigations and research relating to conservation of natural resources;
- ▶ Conduct educational and demonstration projects;
- ▶ Carry out improvements to conserve natural resources;
- ▶ Cooperate or enter into agreements with others, including other conservation districts;
- ▶ Acquire property, donations, gifts and contributions;
- ▶ Make available to land occupiers equipment and materials to assist them in conserving natural resources;
- ▶ Prepare and keep current a long-range conservation plan and an annual work plan;
- ▶ Administer any conservation project or program within the conservation district boundaries;
- ▶ Sue and be sued; and
- ▶ Hold public hearings, annual meetings, and perform other actions to keep citizens and agencies informed.

[\*\*RCW 89.08.220\*\*](#) further describes the corporate status and powers of conservation districts as follows:

*“A conservation district organized under the provisions of chapter 184, Laws of 1973 1st ex. sess. shall constitute a governmental subdivision of this state, and a public body corporate and politic exercising public powers, but shall not levy taxes or issue bonds and such district, and the supervisors*

*thereof, shall have the following powers, in addition to others granted in other sections of chapter 184, Laws of 1973 1st ex. sess.:*

*(1) To conduct surveys, investigations, and research relating to the conservation of renewable natural resources and the preventive and control measures and works of improvement needed, to publish the results of such surveys, investigations, or research, and to disseminate information concerning such preventive and control measures and works of improvement: PROVIDED, That in order to avoid duplication of research activities, no district shall initiate any research program except in cooperation with the government of this state or any of its agencies, or with the United States or any of its agencies;*

*(2) To conduct educational and demonstrational projects on any lands within the district upon obtaining the consent of the occupier of such lands and such necessary rights or interests in such lands as may be required in order to demonstrate by example the means, methods, measures, and works of improvement by which the conservation of renewable natural resources may be carried out;*

*(3) To carry out preventative and control measures and works of improvement for the conservation of renewable natural resources, within the district including, but not limited to, engineering operations, methods of cultivation, the growing of vegetation, changes in use of lands, and the measures listed in RCW 89.08.010, on any lands within the district upon obtaining the consent of the occupier of such lands and such necessary rights or interests in such lands as may be required;*

*(4) To cooperate or enter into agreements with, and within the limits of appropriations duly made available to it by law, to furnish financial or other aid to any agency, governmental or otherwise, or any occupier of lands within the district in the carrying on of preventive and control measures and works of improvement for the conservation of renewable natural resources within the district, subject to such conditions as the*



*supervisors may deem necessary to advance the purposes of chapter 184, Laws of 1973 1st ex. sess. For purposes of this subsection only, land occupiers who are also district supervisors are not subject to the provisions of RCW 42.23.030;*

*(5) To obtain options upon and to acquire in any manner, except by condemnation, by purchase, exchange, lease, gift, bequest, devise, or otherwise, any property, real or personal, or rights or interests therein; to maintain, administer, and improve any properties acquired, to receive income from such properties and to expend such income in carrying out the purposes and provisions of chapter 184, Laws of 1973 1st ex. sess.; and to sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of any of its property or interests therein in furtherance of the purposes and the provisions of chapter 184, Laws of 1973 1st ex. sess.;*

*(6) To make available, on such terms, as it shall prescribe, to land occupiers within the district, agricultural and engineering machinery and equipment, fertilizer, seeds, seedlings, and such other equipment and material as will assist them to carry on operations upon their lands for the conservation of renewable natural resources;*

*(7) To prepare and keep current a comprehensive long-range program recommending the conservation of all the renewable natural resources of the district. Such programs shall be directed toward the best use of renewable natural resources and in a manner that will best meet the needs of the district and the state, taking into consideration, where appropriate, such uses as farming, grazing, timber supply, forest, parks, outdoor recreation, potable water supplies for urban and rural areas, water for agriculture, minimal flow, and industrial uses, watershed stabilization, control of soil erosion, retardation of water run-off, flood prevention and control, reservoirs and other water storage, restriction of developments of flood plains, protection of open space and scenery, preservation of natural beauty, protection of fish and wildlife, preservation of wilderness areas and wild rivers, the prevention or reduction of sedimentation and other pollution in rivers and other waters,*

*and such location of highways, schools, housing developments, industries, airports and other facilities and structures as will fit the needs of the state and be consistent with the best uses of the renewable natural resources of the state. The program shall include an inventory of all renewable natural resources in the district, a compilation of current resource needs, projections of future resource requirements, priorities for various resource activities, projected timetables, descriptions of available alternatives, and provisions for coordination with other resource programs.*

*The district shall also prepare an annual work plan, which shall describe the action programs, services, facilities, materials, working arrangements and estimated funds needed to carry out the parts of the long-range programs that are of the highest priorities.*

*The districts shall hold public hearings at appropriate times in connection with the preparation of programs and plans, shall give careful consideration to the views expressed and problems revealed in hearings, and shall keep the public informed concerning their programs, plans, and activities. Occupiers of land shall be invited to submit proposals for consideration to such hearings. The districts may supplement such hearings with meetings, referenda and other suitable means to determine the wishes of interested parties and the general public in regard to current and proposed plans and programs of a district. They shall confer with public and private agencies, individually and in groups, to give and obtain information and understanding of the impact of district operations upon agriculture, forestry, water supply and quality, flood control, particular industries, commercial concerns and other public and private interests, both rural and urban.*

*Each district shall submit to the commission its proposed long-range program and annual work plans for review and comment. The long-range renewable natural resource program, together with the supplemental annual work plans, developed by each district under the foregoing procedures shall*

*have official status as the authorized program of the district, and it shall be published by the districts as its "renewable resources program". Copies shall be made available by the districts to the appropriate counties, municipalities, special purpose districts and state agencies, and shall be made available in convenient places for examination by public land occupier or private interest concerned. Summaries of the program and selected material there from shall be distributed as widely as feasible for public information;*

*(8) To administer any project or program concerned with the conservation of renewable natural resources located within its boundaries undertaken by any federal, state, or other public agency by entering into a contract or other appropriate administrative arrangement with any agency administering such project or program;*

*(9) Cooperate with other districts organized under chapter 184, Laws of 1973 1st ex. sess. in the exercise of any of its powers;*

*(10) To accept donations, gifts, and contributions in money, services, materials, or otherwise, from the United States or any of its agencies, from this state or any of its agencies, or from any other source, and to use or expend such moneys, services, materials, or any contributions in carrying out the purposes of chapter 184, Laws 1973 1st ex. sess.;*

*(11) To sue and be sued in the name of the district; to have a seal which shall be judicially noticed; have perpetual succession unless terminated as hereinafter provided; to make and execute contracts and other instruments, necessary or convenient to the exercise of its powers; to borrow money and to pledge, mortgage and assign the income of the district and its real or personal property therefore; and to make, amend rules and regulations not inconsistent with chapter 184, Laws of 1973 1st ex. sess. and to carry into effect its purposes;*

*(12) Any two or more districts may engage in joint activities*

*by agreement between or among them in planning, financing, constructing, operating, maintaining, and administering any program or project concerned with the conservation of renewable natural resources. The districts concerned may make available for purposes of the agreement any funds, property, personnel, equipment, or services available to them under chapter 184, Laws of 1973 1st ex. sess.;*

*Any district may enter into such agreements with a district or districts in adjoining states to carry out such purposes if the law in such other states permits the districts in such states to enter into such agreements. The commission shall have authority to propose, guide, and facilitate the establishment and carrying out of any such agreement;*

*(13) Every district shall, through public hearings, annual meetings, publications, or other means, keep the general public, agencies and occupiers of land within the district, informed of the works and activities planned and administered by the district, of the purposes these will serve, of the income and expenditures of the district, of the funds borrowed by the district and the purposes for which such funds are expended, and of the results achieved annually by the district; and*

*(14) The supervisors of conservation districts may designate an area, state, and national association of conservation districts as a coordinating agency in the execution of the duties imposed by this chapter, and to make gifts in the form of dues, quotas, or otherwise to such associations for costs of services rendered, and may support and attend such meetings as may be required to promote and perfect the organization and to affect its purposes."*



# Relationship Between the State Conservation Commission and Conservation Districts

Since the establishment of the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) in 1939, the state agency has provided direct services to assist conservation districts with their programs. This includes funding, invoicing, budgeting, fiscal operations, auditing, planning, reporting, policy development, administration, accountability, training, capacity building, district operations, marketing, and state- and federal-level public outreach. The Commission also appoints two supervisors to each conservation district board.

Once every two years the Commission and conservation districts work together to compile a biennial budget request to serve all conservation districts and the agency. The Commission submits the full budget proposal to the governor and legislature for funding consideration. Once the legislature passes a budget, the Commission allocates funding to the conservation districts.

State law also directs the Commission to serve an important role in monitoring the accountability of conservation districts and providing assistance to help conservation districts stay compliant with state and federal laws.

The Commission is an important partner with conservation districts, joining together for effective and efficient on-the-ground conservation in the state.

# STAY IN TOUCH WITH THE COMMISSION

Stay informed on what’s happening at the Commission and with other conservation districts by signing up for our email subscription service, GovDelivery. [Learn how to subscribe](#). You can sign up for a variety of important topics and choose how frequently you’d like to receive them. Important topics for supervisors include:

- ▶ Budget/Legislative
- ▶ Commission Operations
  - Meetings and Events
  - Agency Updates
- ▶ District Operations and Capacity Building
  - Conservation Accountability and Performance Program (CAPP)
  - Elections and Appointments
  - Operations Briefs
  - District Digest (monthly newsletter to conservation district supervisors and staff)
  - Supervisor Leadership
- ▶ Finance and Grant Management
  - Audits/Schedules
- ▶ Programs and Policy
- ▶ Policy Updates
- ▶ Partners
  - Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) announcements
  - Washington Association of District Employees (WADE) announcements





## CONSERVATION DISTRICT CONTACT INFORMATION

Consult the [Conservation District Map and Directory](#) for contact information for each of Washington's conservation districts.

## CONSERVATION DISTRICT ASSOCIATIONS

*Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD)*  
[wadistricts.org](http://wadistricts.org) | 360-754-3588 x125

WACD is a non-profit, nongovernmental organization of the 45 conservation districts in Washington State. WACD is made up of six area associations of conservation districts and serves as a state voice for conservation districts on state policy, legislation, communication, and funding for conservation activities. WACD also provides forums to inform, train, and educate supervisors and recognize outstanding conservation district individuals and programs. WACD has a committee structure that allows for additional opportunities for participation. Policy is made through a grass roots resolution process originating in locally led conservation districts.

*National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)*  
[nacdn.net](http://nacdn.net) | 202-547-6223

NACD is a non-profit, nongovernmental organization representing over three thousand conservation districts and their state associations in the fifty states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. NACD lobbies for federal conservation legislation and funding in Congress. It also provides brochures, reports, conservation films, training, and education.



***Washington Association of District Employees (WADE)***  
[sites.google.com/site/wadistrictemployees/](https://sites.google.com/site/wadistrictemployees/)

WADE was formed in 1986 to develop conservation district employees' abilities through continuing education, recognition and a network of professional support. WADE provides training and support for conservation district employees to increase their ability to deliver quality conservation assistance to local land occupiers.

***National Conservation District Employees Association (NCDEA)***  
[ncdea.us](https://ncdea.us)

The NCDEA was formed in 1992 to strengthen conservation district programs, provide assistance, information and support to conservation district boards and their employees. The association also promotes the professional development of conservation district employees and will assist any agency, association, organization, municipality, group, or individual who supports conservation districts in the spirit of cooperation, sound conservation practices, and proper land use.

## **SUPPORT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

***Enduris***  
[enduris.us](https://enduris.us) | 509-838-0910

Enduris is the premier risk sharing pool for special purpose districts in Washington and offers advice on how to minimize or avoid risk. They are government risk experts who provide coverage and risk management solutions. Their membership includes over 500 local governments or special purpose districts

that “pool” resources to share risk and reduce cost. Their mission is to provide financial protection, broad coverage, and risk management services responsive to members’ needs.

### ***Municipal Research Services Center (MRSC)***

[mrsc.org](http://mrsc.org) | 800-933-6772

MRSC is a nonprofit organization that helps local governments across Washington State better serve their citizens by providing free legal and policy guidance on any topic. MRSC serves all 281 cities and towns in Washington, all 39 counties, and hundreds of special purpose districts, state agencies, and other government partners. Originally established in 1934 as the University of Washington Bureau of Governmental Research, MRSC has operated as a private nonprofit since 1969.

## **FEDERAL AGENCIES**

### ***USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)***

[wa.nrcs.usda.gov](http://wa.nrcs.usda.gov) | 509-323-2900

NRCS has a long and extensive tradition of work with conservation districts. The NRCS may provide personnel, equipment, office space, and counsel to conservation districts. It also provides free technical assistance with soils, conservation practices, and planning to land users and others.

### ***USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)***

[fsa.usda.gov](http://fsa.usda.gov) | 509-323-3000

The FSA administers cost-sharing programs to farmers implementing conservation. It also provides aerial photos for conservation work; assistance for land

treatment and development, and natural disaster relief.

***Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)***

[bpa.gov](https://www.bpa.gov) | 800-282-3713

The BPA markets hydroelectric power in the Pacific Northwest and funds a large part of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's fish and wildlife plan.

***U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)***

[fws.gov](https://www.fws.gov) | 800-344-9453

USFWS is responsible for wild birds, mammals (except certain marine mammals), and inland sport fisheries. The USFWS conducts research activities, conducts environmental impact assessments, and manages wildlife refuges. In some cases, USFWS provides funding for habitat restoration projects.

***Forest Service (USFS)***

[fs.usda.gov](https://www.fs.usda.gov) | 800-832-1355

USFS has federal responsibility for forestry. The USFS sponsors cooperative programs through state forestry agencies, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and conservation districts to control fires, stabilize gullies, improve forest growth, plant trees, and control forest pests.

***Bureau of Land Management (BLM)***

[blm.gov](https://www.blm.gov) | 503-808-6001

The BLM is responsible for managing public lands for a variety of uses such as energy development, livestock grazing, recreation, and timber harvesting while ensuring natural, cultural, and historic resources are

maintained for present and future use.

***National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)  
Fisheries***

**[noaa.gov](http://noaa.gov)**

NOAA Fisheries is responsible for providing programs to try to save the marine endangered species of the United States. Their actions affect the Columbia River and Snake River watersheds of the Northwest.

***U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)***

**[usbr.gov](http://usbr.gov)**

BOR is the largest wholesaler of water in the country. Their mission is to assist in meeting the increasing water demands of the West while protecting the environment and the public's investment in these structures.

***U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)***

**[usace.army.mil](http://usace.army.mil)**

The Corps delivers vital public and military engineering services; partnering in peace and war to strengthen our Nation's security, energize the economy and reduce risks from disasters. Corps permits are necessary for any work, including construction and dredging, in the Nation's navigable waters.

## **STATE AGENCIES**

***Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC)***

**[scc.wa.gov](http://scc.wa.gov) | 360-407-6200**

The Washington State Conservation Commission has ten members. The Commission and its staff provide administrative and program assistance and guidance

to conservation districts, disseminate information on statewide conservation activities, collect and share natural resource conservation data, and seek sources of funding to aid in conservation district projects, programs and operations.

### ***Department of Agriculture (WSDA)***

[agr.wa.gov](http://agr.wa.gov) | 360-902-1887

Washington State Department of Agriculture administers state laws protecting agricultural producers from diseases, insects, predators, and weeds. The WSDA regulates fruit, seed and other agricultural product grading. The WSDA also issues and approves licenses for nursery dealers, pesticide operators, and applicators; and issues labeling permits for products used by agricultural producers such as seed, fertilizer, pesticide, etc. The WSDA is also involved in water resources, transportation, farm labor, and other matters related to the production, distribution and sale of agricultural commodities.

### ***Department of Ecology (Ecology)***

[ecy.wa.gov](http://ecy.wa.gov) | 360-407-6000

Ecology programs address air pollution, water pollution, solid waste, hazardous waste, noise pollution, litter and resource recovery, water resources, and shoreline and coastal zone management. Ecology is both an administrative and a regulatory agency with authority to enforce the state's environmental laws. Ecology monitors all major waterways, administers grants for wastewater treatment facilities, and issues permits for all waste dischargers. Ecology also issues grants to reduce non-point water pollution.

## ***Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO)***

**[rco.wa.gov](http://rco.wa.gov)** | 360-902-3000

RCO provides statewide leadership and funding to protect and improve the best of Washington's natural and outdoor recreation resources, now and for future generations. At the writing of this handbook, RCO manages 35 different categories of grants that fund working farms, salmon recovery, ball fields, trails, wildlife habitat, and much more. A few conservation districts have received funding for agricultural conservation easements from RCO.

## ***Governor's Office of Financial Management (OFM)***

**[ofm.wa.gov](http://ofm.wa.gov)**

The OFM provides oversight of the Commission and all financial activities including oversight of the funds allocated by the Commission to the conservation districts. OFM provides budget planning and fiscal administration direction for state agencies. OFM also monitors agency spending, maintains the statewide accounting system, and forecasts state population.

## ***Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)***

**[wdfw.wa.gov](http://wdfw.wa.gov)** | 360-902-2200

WDFW enforces state fish and game laws; classifies and monitors wildlife species, numbers, and habitat; improves hunting and fishing access; and advises individuals and groups on ways to minimize man-made impacts to wildlife.

## ***Department of Natural Resources (DNR)***

**[dnr.wa.gov](http://dnr.wa.gov)** | 360-902-1000

DNR manages and protects state-owned lands. DNR

foresters also assist private landowners through the Forest Stewardship Program and Small Forest Landowner Office. DNR administers the Forest Practices Act, a Washington state law regulating forest management practices such as timber harvest.

***Washington State University Cooperative Extension (WSU)***  
[ext.wsu.edu](http://ext.wsu.edu) | 509-335-3564

Assistance from WSU is commonly found through the WSU Cooperative Extension. Extension agents (“county agents”) and specialists may provide education and training for conservation districts in economics, engineering, agronomy and soils, animal sciences, entomology, food science and technology, forestry and range management, home economics, horticulture, plant pathology, sociology, veterinary science, and many other areas. Most counties have an Extension office which serves as the local contact for conservation districts to request Extension assistance.

## **COUNTY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Many conservation districts in Washington follow county lines. While there’s no legal relationship between the two, counties can be helpful in several ways.

Counties can provide:

- ▶ Office space
- ▶ Funding
- ▶ Co-sponsorship for watershed projects and responsibility for operation and maintenance
- ▶ Bridge and culvert replacement
- ▶ Use of earthmoving equipment

- ▶ Cooperation on parks and other county-owned land
- ▶ Funds for soil surveys

County contacts include: commissioners, council, auditor, treasurer, recorder, engineer, assessor, highway superintendent, health officer, planning commission, parks and recreation department, weed district, and others.

Similar assistance may be available from city and municipal governments.



# Helpful Web Resources

## *Annual and Long-range Planning*

[scc.wa.gov/plans-reports](http://scc.wa.gov/plans-reports)

## *Audits and Auditing*

[sao.wa.gov/about-audits/about-local-government-audits/](http://sao.wa.gov/about-audits/about-local-government-audits/)

## *Center for Technical Development*

[wactd.org](http://wactd.org)

## *Elections and Appointment Procedures*

[www.scc.wa.gov/cd/elections-administrators](http://www.scc.wa.gov/cd/elections-administrators)

## *Personnel Management*

[mrsc.org/getdoc/0cbd8b88-8894-4c4e-b232-c69fe4ee7e37/Personnel.aspx](http://mrsc.org/getdoc/0cbd8b88-8894-4c4e-b232-c69fe4ee7e37/Personnel.aspx)

## *Open Public Meetings*

[mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Legal/Open-Government/Open-Public-Meetings-Act.aspx](http://mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Legal/Open-Government/Open-Public-Meetings-Act.aspx)

## *Executive Sessions (closed session)*

[mrsc.org/getmedia/be451768-7eb7-4da4-886b-27d61c28ed21/opma\\_executive%20session\\_checklist.aspx](http://mrsc.org/getmedia/be451768-7eb7-4da4-886b-27d61c28ed21/opma_executive%20session_checklist.aspx)

## *Marketing Toolkit (resources to help WA CDs promote themselves and their services)*

[scc.wa.gov/marketing-toolkit](http://scc.wa.gov/marketing-toolkit)

## *Public Records*

[mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Legal/Open-Government/Public-Records-Act.aspx](http://mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Legal/Open-Government/Public-Records-Act.aspx)

## *Local Conservation District Funding*

[District Operations Brief - Rates and Charges](#)

# Common Abbreviations and Acronyms

**AOC** - Area of Concern

**APW or APOW** - Annual Plan of Work

**AQ** - Air Quality

**ARS** - Agricultural Research Service (USDA)

**AWEP** - Agricultural Water Enhancement Program

**BARS** - Budgeting Accounting and Reporting System

**BIA** - Bureau of Indian Affairs

**BLM** - Bureau of Land Management

**BMP** - Best Management Practices

**BOR or USBR** - Bureau of Reclamation

**BPA** - Bonneville Power Administration

**CAFO** - Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation

**CAO** - Critical Areas Ordinance

**CAPP** - Conservation Accountability and Performance Program

**CART** - Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool

**CBFWA** - Columbia Basin Fish & Wildlife Authority

**CCRP** - Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (NRCS)

**CCWF** - Centennial Clean Water Fund

**CD** - Conservation District

**CE** - Conservation Easement

**CED** - County Executive Director (FSA)

**CMT** - Conservation Management Tool

**CIG** - Conservation Innovation Grant (NRCS)

**CIT** - Cowlitz Indian Tribe

**CMS** - Conservation Management System

**CNMP** - Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan

**Commission** - Washington State Conservation Commission

**Corps or COE** - Army Corps of Engineers

**CPDS** - Conservation Practice Data System (SCC)

**CREP** - Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

**CRITFC** - Columbia River  
Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

**CRM** - Coordinated Resource  
Management

**CRMP** - Coordinated  
Resource Management  
Planning

**CRP** - Conservation Reserve  
Program

**CRS** - Cultural Resource  
Specialist

**CSP** - Conservation  
Stewardship Program

**CTA** - Conservation  
Technical Assistance

**CTCR** - Confederated Tribes  
of the Chehalis Reservation

**CTCR** - Confederated Tribes  
of the Colville Reservation

**CTD** - Center for Technical  
Development (SCC, CDs,  
WADE, WACD)

**CWA** - Clean Water Act  
or Cooperative Working  
Agreement

**CWPP** - Community Wildfire  
Protection Plan

**CWSRF** - Clean Water State  
Revolving Fund

**CZM** - Coastal Zone  
Management

**DAHPP** - WA Department of  
Historic Preservation

**DAP** - Disaster Assistance  
Program

**DC** - District  
Conservationist

**DEI** - Diversity, Equity, and  
Inclusion

**DIP** - District Implemented  
Project

**DNR** - Department  
of Natural Resources,  
Washington State

**DOH** - Department of  
Health

**DOE** - Department of  
Energy (US) or Department  
of Ecology

**DOT** - Department  
of Transportation,  
Washington State

**DU** - Ducks Unlimited

**DWSRF** - Drinking Water  
State Revolving Loan Fund

**EA** - Extension Agent-or-  
Environmental Assessment

**EBI** - Environmental  
Benefits Index

**ECY or Ecology** -  
Washington State  
Department of Ecology

**EDA** - Economic  
Development  
Administration

**EE** - Environmental Education

**EFOTG** - Electronic Field Office Technical Guide

**EI** - Erodibility Index

**EIS** - Environmental Impact Statement

**EMD** - WA Emergency Management Department

**EPA** - Environmental Protection Agency

**EQIP** - Environmental Quality Incentives Program

**ESA** - Endangered Species Act

**ESAC** - Ecosystem Advisory Committee

**ESCS** - Economic Statistics and Cooperative Service

**ESD** - Employment Security Department

**ESHB** - Engrossed Substitute House Bill

**ESL** - English as a Second Language

**EWP** - Emergency Watershed Protection Program

**FA** - Financial Assistance

**FAC** - Food and Agriculture Committee

**FarmPAI** - Farm Protection and Affordability Investment

**FCIC** - Federal Crop Insurance Corporation

**FEMA** - Federal Emergency Management Agency

**FEMAT** - Forest Ecosystem Management Assessment Team

**FHAC** - Forest Health Advisory Committee (WA DNR)

**FIFRA** - Federal Insecticide, Fungicide & Rodenticide Act

**FFA** - Future Farmers of America

**FFFPP or '3F2P'** - Family Farm Forestry Passage Program

**FLSA** - Fair Labor Standards Act (29USC201)

**FmHA** - Farmers Home Administration

**FMLA** - Family Medical Leave Act (Federal)

**FOIA** - Freedom of Information Act

**FONSI** - Finding of No Significant Impact

**FOTG** - Field Office Technical Guide

**FPA** - Forest Practices Act

**FPLA** - Farm Protection and Land Access Program

**FPP** - Farmland Preservation Program

**FQPA** - Food Quality Protection Act

**FRMC** - Federal Records Management Council

**FSA** - Farm Service Agency (USDA)

**FSA** - Food Security Act

**FTE** - Full Time Equivalent (Employee)

**FW** - Firewise

**GAO** - General Accounting Office (U.S.)

**GIS** - Geographic Information Systems

**GLCI** - Grazing Land Conservation Initiative

**GMA** - Growth Management Act

**GPA** - Geographic Priority Area

**GPS** - Global Positioning System

**GSA** - General Services Administration

**GWMA** - Groundwater Management Area

**HCP** - Habitat Conservation Plan

**HIZ** - Home Ignition Zone

**HEL** - Highly Erodible Land

**HFRP** - Healthy Forest Reserve Program

**HPA** - Hydraulic Project Application

**HUC** - Hydraulic Unit Code

**IAREC** - Irrigated Agriculture Research & Extension Center

**IFM** - Integrated Farm Management

**ILA** - Interlocal Agreement

**IPA** - Interagency Personnel Agreement

**IPM** - Integrated Pest Management

**IRA** - Inflation Reduction Act

**IWM** - Irrigation Water Management

**JARPA** - Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application

**JLARC** - Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee

**KTI** - Kalispel Tribe of Indians

**LEKT** - Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe

**LID** - Low Impact Development

**L&I** - Washington State Department of Labor and Industries

**LTA** - Land Trust Alliance

**LTA** - Long-Term Agreement

**LWG** - Local Work Group

**MIT** - Muckleshoot Indian Tribe

**MOA** - Memorandum of Agreement

**MOU** - Memorandum of Understanding

**MRC** - Marine Resources Council

**MRSC** - Municipal Research and Services Center

**NACD** - National Association of Conservation Districts

**NCDEA** - National Conservation District Employees Association

**NASCA** - National Association of State Conservation Agencies

**NEPA** - National Environmental Policy Act

**NFWF** - National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

**NIPF** - Nonindustrial Private Forest Lands

**NIT** - Nooksack Indian Tribe

**NMFS** - National Marine Fisheries Service

**NMP** - Nutrient Management Plan

**NOAA** - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**NPDES** - National Pollution Discharge Elimination System

**N-P-K** - Nitrogen Phosphorus Potassium

**NPS** - Nonpoint Source

**NPSP** - Non-point source pollution

**NRCS** - Natural Resources Conservation Service

**NRDC** - Natural Resources Defense Council

**NRI** - Natural Resources Inventory

**NRI Program** - Natural Resource Investments (Conservation district program funded through the Conservation Commission)

**NRYC** - Natural Resources Youth Camp

**NSF** - National Science Foundation

**NTSC** - National Technical Support Center (NRCS)

**NTU** - Neophelometric Turbidity Unit

**NWCAA** - Northwest Clean Air Agency

**NWIFC** - Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission

**NWQI** - National Water Quality Initiative

**NWSC** - Northwest Straits Commission

**OCR** - Office of Columbia River (Department of Ecology)

**OCS** - Outer Continental Shelf

**OFM** - Office of Financial Management

**OFFP** - Office of Farmland Preservation

**OMB** - U.S. Office of Management and Budget

**OPMA** - Open Public Meetings Act

**OSHA** - Occupational Safety and Health Act (29USC15)

**PAC** - Policy Advisory Committee

**PAM** - Polyacrylamide

**PE** - Professional Engineer

**PGST** - Port Gamble S'klallam Tribe

**PIE** - Public Information and Education

**PIP** - Practice Incentive Payment

**PL** - Public Law

**PLT** - Project Learning Tree

**PM** - Particulate Matter (Air Quality Measurement)

**PMC** - Plant Materials Center (WACD & NRCS)

**PP&L** - Pacific Power

**PPE** - Personal Protective Equipment

**PRA** - Public Records Act

**PRR** - Public Records Request

**ProTracts** - Program Contract System (NRCS)

**PSI** - Pounds per square inch

**PSP** - Puget Sound Partnership

**PUD** - Public Utility District

**QA/QC** - Quality Assurance/Quality Control

**QAPP** - Quality Assurance Project Plan

**QIN** - Quinault Indian Nation

**RCA** - Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act

**RCAP** - Rural Community Assistance Partnership

**RC&D** - Resources Conservation and Development

**RCO** - Recreation and Conservation Office

**RCPP** - Regional Conservation Partnership Program

**RCW** - Revised Code of Washington

**RCWP** - Rural Clean Water Program

**RD** - Rural Development

**Ref.** - Referendum

**RFEG** - Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group

**RFP** - Request for Proposals

**RIF** - Reduction in Force

**RM** - Regional Manager (SCC)

**RMS** - Resource Management System

**RMZ** - Riparian Management Zone

**ROA** - Report of Accomplishments

**RPPP** - Riparian Plant Propagation Program

**RUSLE** - Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation

**SAO** - State Auditor's Office

**SARE** - Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education

**SBT** - Shoalwater Bay Tribe

**SCC** - State Conservation Commission

**SDWA** - Safe Drinking Water Act

**SEPA** - State Environmental Policy Act

**SFF** - Sustainable Farms and Fields

**SHPO** - State Historic Preservation Officer (DAHP)

**SIN** - Samish Indian Nation

**SIT** - Squaxin Island Tribe

**SITC** - Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

**SL** - Soil Loss

**SPA** - WA Shoreline Protection Act

**SPD** - Shellfish Protection District

**SRF** - State Revolving Fund

**SRFB** - Salmon Recovery Fund Board

**SRSC** - Skagit River System Cooperative

**SSIT** - Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe



**STAC** - State Technical Advisor Committee (NRCS)

**STEEP** - Solutions to Economic and Environmental Problems

**STI** - Spokane Tribe of Indians

**STI** - Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians

**Superfund** - Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act

**SWAPA** - Soil, Water, Air, Plants, Animals

**SWAPA+HE** - Soil, Water, Air, Plants, Animals + Humans and Energy

**SWCD** - Soil and Water Conservation District

**SWCS** - Soil and Water Conservation Society

**T** - Soil Loss Tolerance Rate (USDA)

**T&E** - Threatened and Endangered Species

**TA** - Technical assistance

**TFW** - Timber/Fish/Wildlife Policy Committee (DNR)

**TMDL** - Total Maximum Daily Load

**TNC** - The Nature Conservancy

**TSP** - Technical Services Provider

**TSS** - Total Suspended Solids

**TU** - Trout Unlimited

**USACE** - US Army Corps of Engineers

**USBR or BOR** - US Bureau of Reclamation

**USDA** - United States Department of Agriculture

**USFS** - United States Forest Service

**USFWS** - United States Fish & Wildlife Service

**USGS** - US Geological Service

**USIT** - Upper Skagit Indian Tribe

**USLE** - Universal Soil Loss Equation

**USMCA** - United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement

**UTC** - Utilities and Transportation Commission

**UW** - University of Washington

**VA** - Department of Veteran Affairs

**VCC** - Veteran Conservation Corps

**VSP** - Voluntary Stewardship Program

**WAC** - Washington  
Administrative Code

**WACD** - Washington  
Association of Conservation  
Districts

**WADE** - Washington  
Association of District  
Employees

**WAG** - Wolf Advisory Group  
(WDFW)

**WALT** - Washington  
Association of Land Trusts

**WATCAC** - Washington State  
Tribal Advisory Committee  
(NRCS)

**WAWG** - Washington  
Association of Wheat  
Growers

**WCA** - Washington  
Cattlemen's Association

**WCC** - Washington  
Conservation Corps

**WSRRI** - Washington  
Shrubsteppe Restoration  
and Resiliency Initiative

**WEC** - Washington  
Environmental Council

**WEPS** - Wind Erosion

**WDFW** - Washington State  
Department of Fish &  
Wildlife

**WEQ** - Wind Erosion  
Equation

**WFFA** - Washington Farm  
Forestry Association

**WHIP** - Wildlife Habitat  
Incentives Program

**WID** - Watershed  
Improvement District

**WMS** - Washington  
Management Service

**WQ** - Water Quality

**WQC** - Water Quality  
Committee

**WQM** - Water Quality  
Management

**WQMA** - Water Quality  
Management Area

**WQMP** - Water Quality  
Management Plan

**WRDA** - Water Resources  
Development Act

**WRIA** - Water Resource  
Inventory Area

**WSAC** - Washington State  
Association of Counties

# Numbers

[RCW 89.08](#) - Conservation Districts Law

[WAC 135](#) - Conservation Commission Regulations

[RCW 42.23](#) - Municipal Code of Ethics

[RCW 42.30](#) - Open Public Meetings Act

[RCW 42.56](#) - Public Records Act

[RCW 49.60](#) - WA Freedom from Discrimination Act

[RCW 42.52](#) - Ethics in Public Service (State)

[RCW 49.17](#) - State Industrial Safety & Health

[RCW 42.17](#) - State Public Disclosure Act

[HR 2642](#) - Farm Bill (Agricultural Act of 2014)

[2514 / ESHB 2514](#) - WA Watershed Planning Act

[2496 / ESHB 2496](#) - WA Salmon Recovery Act

[319](#) - Section 319 of Clean Water Act addressing Nonpoint Source Pollution

[305\(b\)](#) - Section 305(b) of Clean Water Act requiring states to submit a report every other year describing the water quality of the waters within its borders for the preceding year

[303\(d\)](#) - Section 303(d) of Clean Water Act creating list of states' impaired waters and TMDL

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