

Approved November 30, 2023

Regular Business Meeting ~

The Washington State Conservation Commission (Commission/SCC) met virtually as well as in-person on Thursday, September 21, 2023 in Clarkston, Washington. Chair Daryl Williams called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

Note: All meeting materials can be found on our [meetings webpage](#). You will find the meeting packet with background information, presentations and past meeting information.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Daryl Williams, Chairman, *Governor Appointee*
Larry Cochran, Vice-Chairman, *elected eastern region rep.*
Cherie Kearney, *Governor Appointee*
Brook Beeler, *Department of Ecology*
Dean Longrie, *Elected west region rep*
Harold Crose, *Elected central region rep (online)*
Jim Kropf, *Washington State University (online)*
Mike Mumford, *Washington Association of Conservation Districts*
Perry Beale, *Department of Agriculture*
Terra Rentz, *Department of Natural Resources (online)*

Quorum present.

COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT

Kirk Robinson, *Interim Executive Director*
Alicia McClendon, *Administrative Assistant*
Alison Halpern, *Scientific Policy Advisor*
Brian Cochran, *Habitat and Monitoring Coordinator*
Jean Fike, *Puget Sound Regional Manager (online)*
Jon Culp, *Water Resources Program Manager*
Josh Giuntoli, *Southwest Regional Manager (online)*
Mike Baden, *NC and NE Regional Manager*
Paige DeChambeau, *Communications Director*
Sarah Groth, *Director of Accounting & Budget*
Shana Joy, *District Operations Manager*

PARTNERS REPRESENTED

Angie Reseland, *Dept of Fish and Wildlife (online)*
Doug Rushton, *National Association of Conservation Districts*
Jon Wyss, *Farm Service Agency (online)*
Nick Vira, *Natural Resources Conservation Service*
Nick Peak, *EPA Region 10 (online)*
Nick Werner, *Farm Service Agency*
Lucy Edmondson, *Environmental Protection Agency (online)*
Tom Salzer, *WA Association of Conservation Districts*
Roylene Comes at Night, *Natural Resources Conservation Service*

GUESTS ATTENDED

Please see “**Attachment A**” for full list of attendees.

ACTION MINUTES TAKEN

Meeting called to order at 8:31am. Lori Gonzalez to call roll call. States there is a quorum present. After Commissioner roll call, introductions were done for those in person at the meeting as well as online.

Chair Williams calls for a minor change to the agenda. Requests that Nez Perce to adjust time for Nez Perce tribal priorities to 11:30 a.m.

Chair Williams thanks Asotin County Conservation District (ACCD) for hosting the tour and dinner on September 20, 2023. Representative from ACCD thanks everyone for coming to the westside and joining the conservation tour put together by staff.

Chair Williams thanks Commissioner Terra Rentz for her time on the Commission. Terra will be taking a different job away from Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and will no longer be serving as a Commissioner on the board. DNR has assigned Karen Zirkle to serve as an interim until someone is appointed permanently. We wish you all the best, Terra!

CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Williams moves onto Consent Agenda.

Motion by Commissioner Longrie to adopt the September 21, 2023 draft business meeting minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Cochran. Motion passed.

COMMISSION OPERATIONS

Chair Williams moves to Commission Operations and opens for public comment.

Annually, the Regional Managers work with other Commission staff and conservation districts to propose meeting locations and host conservation districts for the upcoming year of Commission meetings. A proposal for the following years' meetings is brought forward to the September Commission meeting for review and requested action.

Below are a list of dates and locations presented to Commission Members.

January 18, 2024- Host: Whatcom CD (virtual tour only) in/near Lacey, WA

March 20 & 21, 2024- Host: Mason CD, in/near Shelton

May 14, 15, & 16, 2024-Host: Palouse CD in/near Pullman

July 17 & 18, 2024- Host: Clark CD in/near Vancouver

September 18 & 19, 2024- Host: Okanogan CD in/near Omak

December 5, 2024- WACD Annual Meeting TB

Motion by Commissioner Longrie to approve the proposed Commission meeting dates, proposed locations, and hybrid meeting format for calendar year 2024. Seconded by Commissioner Mumford. Motion passed.

Chair Williams calls on Jean Fike to discuss the Community Engagement Plan.

The HEAL Act (70A.02 RCW) is an environmental justice law passed in 2021. At the time it was passed, seven agencies were included. The SCC was not among them, however, agencies receiving funding from certain sources also have obligations under the HEAL Act. We have been advised that we are required to adopt a community engagement plan in order to access certain funding awarded this biennium – those funds are listed in the meeting packet.

Motion by Commissioner Longrie to move to adopt the provisional community engagement plan as presented and direct staff to engage with districts and interested others in a process to customize. Also moves to authorize staff to develop a small grant program or other funding mechanism for support of district community engagement to utilize the one-time appropriation of funds. Seconded by Commissioner Beeler. Motion passed.

DISTRICT OPERATIONS

Chair Williams moves to District Operations.

Josh Giuntoli, Southwest Regional Manager brings forward a Petition for Inclusion of the City of Ocean Shores into the Grays Harbor Conservation District. Contents of the petition can be found in the business meeting packet.

Motion by Commissioner Longrie to approve the petition for inclusion of the City of Ocean Shores within the boundaries of the Grays Harbor Conservation District. Seconded by Commissioner Kearney. Motion passed.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Chair Williams moves on to Program Updates. Calls for public comment.

Public comments made around VSP funds handling. Discussion continues.

Shana Joy and Jean Fike to discuss updates on the Disaster Assistance Program.

At the July 2023 Commission meeting, staff received approval to circulate the draft revised guidelines for the Disaster Assistance Program (DAP) to conservation districts for comment. Staff anticipate bringing a summary of comments and proposed responses to the November Commission meeting with a proposed final set of DAP guidelines.

Motion by Commissioner Cochran to move to adopt the proposed DAP guidelines as interim with the intent to adopt a final version at next commission meeting on November 30, 2023. Seconded by Commissioner Longrie. Motion passed.

Chair Williams moves forward and calls Jon Culp to discuss Irrigation Efficiencies Grant Program update and Water Resources Report.

Staff propose changing guidelines of the Irrigation Efficiency Grants Program (IEGP) to adopt recommendations from interested conservation districts and the Efficiencies Steering Committee. The changes are proposed to enhance program accessibility and maximum water resource benefit. Jon Culp requests approval on the final guidelines for the IEGP.

Motion by Commissioner Longrie to adopt the final Irrigation Efficiencies Programmatic guidelines. Seconded by Commissioner Beale. Motion passed.

Chair Williams to call on Alison Halpern and Shana Joy to discuss on the Riparian Grant Program Update.

Administration of the Salmon Recovery Funding is progressing quickly with all currently available funds awarded to 30 successful proposals. If more funds became available once our reappropriation figure is clear we may review additional project proposals. A work group has been formed to begin work on the new Riparian Grant Program (RGP) guidelines and an advisory committee is open to all interested individuals to receive updates, information, and opportunities to weigh in on draft guidelines. Our aggressive timeline for work does not align well with the SCC meeting schedule so SCC staff are requesting Commissioner approval to distribute new draft RGP guidelines in advance of the November 30th Commission meeting to allow for a full 45 day review and comment period. Final guidelines, including an outline of comments and how they were addressed, would be presented to Commissioners in January 2024 for requested action at that time.

Motion by Commissioner Mumford to allow staff to distribute a draft of Riparian Grant Program guidelines in advance of the November 30, 2023 commission meeting in order to provide for a full 45 day review and comment period prior to the January 2024 Commission meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Cochran. Motion passed.

Informational Only items discussed.

Chair Williams calls for a closed, executive session. All discussion will be closed to Commission Members and Interim Executive Director only according to Executive Session pursuant to RCW 42.30.110 (g) To evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for public employment or to review the performance of a public employee. However, subject to RCW 42.30.140(4), discussion by a governing body of salaries, wages, and other conditions of employment to be generally applied within the agency shall occur in a meeting open to the public, and when a governing body elects to take final action hiring, setting the salary of an individual employee or class of employees, or discharging or disciplining an employee, that action shall be taken in a meeting open to the public. Meeting goes into closed executive session at 1:32pm to 1:45pm.

Meeting reconvened at 1:45pm with a request for 10 more minutes to finalize executive session.

COMMISSION OPERATIONS

Meeting opens back to the public.

Motion by Commissioner Longrie to appoint Sarah Groth as the SCC Interim Executive Director, effective September 22, 2023, until a new Executive Director has been appointed. Seconded by Commissioner Cochran. Motion passed.

Partner Updates discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.