

## Regular Business Meeting ~

The Washington State Conservation Commission (Commission/SCC) met virtually as well as in-person on Thursday, January 18, 2024, in Olympia, Washington. Chair Larry Cochran called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. Vice-chair Kearney facilitated the meeting in-person.

**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

**Larry Cochran**, Chair, Elected eastern region rep.  
**Cherie Kearney**, Vice-chair, Governor Appointee  
**Daryl Williams**, Governor Appointee  
**Brook Beeler**, Department of Ecology  
**Dean Longrie**, Elected west region rep. (online)  
**Wade Troutman**, Elected central region rep. (online)  
**Jim Kropf**, Washington State University  
**Mike Mumford**, Washington Association of Conservation Districts (online)  
**Perry Beale**, Department of Agriculture  
**Karen Zirkle**, Department of Natural Resources

Quorum present.

### COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT

**James Thompson**, Executive Director  
**Alicia McClendon**, Administrative Assistant  
**Jean Fike**, Puget Sound Regional Manager  
**Karla Heinitz**, Policy Assistant  
**Paige DeChambeau**, Communications Director  
**Sarah Groth**, Director of Accounting & Budget  
**Sarah Wilcox**, Communications Specialist  
**Shana Joy**, District Operations Manager

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

### PARTNERS REPRESENTED

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

Lori Gonzalez performed commissioner roll call and announced a quorum was present. After commissioner roll call, introductions were done for guests who attended the meeting in person as well as online.

## ***Whatcom Conservation District Virtual Tour***

Vice-chair Kearney welcomed and introduced Whatcom Conservation District to lead a virtual tour of district projects. Whatcom CD representatives Brandy Reed, Heather Christianson, Larry Davis, Susie Snider, Valerie Wade and Alan Chapman contributed to the presentation.

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## CONSENT AGENDA

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### ***November 30, 2023 Draft Business Meeting Minutes***

*Motion by Commissioner Longrie to approve the November 30, 2023, draft business meeting minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Williams. Motion carried.*

### ***Out-of-state travel – Washington D.C., March 2024***

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) will be hosting an in-person Legislative Spring Fly-in on March 20, 2024, in Washington D.C. The SCC executive director, chair, and vice-chair, if available, along with Washington conservation leaders around the state meet with our congressional members on natural resource priorities in our state.

Discussion by members.

*Motion by Commissioner Longrie to approve the out of state travel request for up to three SCC representatives to attend the National Association of Conservation District's legislative fly-in scheduled in Washington D.C. in March 2024. Seconded by Commissioner Williams. Motion carried.*

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## PROGRAM UPDATES

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### ***Riparian Grant Program update and request***

Shana Joy presented. The Riparian Grant Program work group, including representatives from conservation districts, WDFW, ECY, WSDA, and RCO met 8 times to discuss aspects of a new riparian grant program in accordance with a budget proviso attached to \$25 million in new Climate Commitment Act funding in the 23-25 biennial budget. SCC staff requested in September, and were subsequently directed, to publish draft programmatic guidelines in advance of the November 30<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting for a full 45-day review and comment period. Draft guidelines were published on November 20, 2023, with a deadline to comment of January 2, 2024. The SCC received two requests for more time, so the decision was made to extend the comment deadline to January 17, 2024, by 5pm. The extension does necessitate that the SCC postpone action on final program guidelines.

SCC staff are requesting that Commissioners direct staff to schedule a special commission meeting in February to take action on the Riparian Grant Program guidelines. We anticipate presenting final guidelines, a compilation of all comments received and if, and how, the guidelines were modified to address them at that time.

**Public comment:**

The following guests provided public comment regarding the Riparian Grant Program guidelines:

- Jim Peters, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
- Jay Gordon, WA State Dairy Federation
- David Marcell, Pacific Conservation District & Grays Harbor Conservation District
- Mike Nordin, Pacific Conservation District & Grays Harbor Conservation District

Discussion by members.

*Motion by Commissioner Longrie to direct SCC staff to schedule a special commission meeting in February 2024 to take action on the interim Riparian Grant Program guidelines and for staff to develop a proposal for final guidelines to emphasize the inclusion of tribal participation. Seconded by Commissioner Beeler. Motion carried.*

**Office of Farmland Preservation – Emerick Rangeland**

The SCC secured grant funding from the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Farmland Preservation Account in 2023 to acquire a permanent agricultural conservation easement on the Emerick Rangeland property in Yakima County. SCC will hold the easement and assume primary legal and financial responsibility for stewarding and enforcing the easement in perpetuity. The project was developed and brought to the SCC by the North Yakima Conservation District (NYCD).

SCC staff are requesting authorization for the SCC Executive Director to sign documents for acquisition of the Emerick Rangeland agricultural conservation easement contingent on completion of the appraisal review.

Discussion by members.

*Motion by Commissioner Mumford to confirm the Commission has determined acquisition of a conservation easement on the property is consistent with the mission, duties, and purposes of the Conservation Commission.*

*The Commission hereby authorizes the State Conservation Commission's Executive Director to sign documents for acquisition of an agricultural conservation easement on the approximately 2,576-acre Emerick Rangeland in Yakima County, contingent on completion of the appraisal review. Seconded by Longrie. Motion carried.*

**Partner presentation** by Rodney Snyder, US EPA Agricultural Advisor on the proposed ESA Mitigation Strategies for Pesticides and [Bulletins Live! Two](#).

Partner Updates discussed.

Chair Cochran adjourned the meeting at 2:45 p.m.