

Washington Association of Conservation Districts
Remote Connection through Zoom
October 18, 2021
Board of Directors October Work Session Minutes

Members Remotely Present

Jeanette Dorner, President (Pierce CD)
Mike Mumford, Vice President (Pend Oreille CD)
Amy McKay, Secretary (Whitman CD)
Dave Fenn, Treasurer (Lewis CD)
Doug Rushton, National Director (Thurston CD)
Chris Porter, Northwest Area Director (King CD)
Alan Chapman, Northwest Area Director (Whatcom CD)
Marshall Stowe, Southwest Area Director (Wahkiakum CD)
Lisa Zaborac, Southwest Area Director (Grays Harbor CD)
John McLean, North Central Area Director (Foster Creek CD)
John Preston, North Central Area Director (Grant County CD)
Cindy Reed, South Central Area Director (North Yakima CD)
Barbara Bailey, South Central Area Director (Underwood CD)
Jeff Schibel, Northeast Area Director (Lincoln County CD)
Mary Collins, Southeast Area Director (Palouse CD)
Bill Blake, WADE President (Skagit CD)

Others Remotely Present

Tom Salzer, WACD Executive Director
Ryan Baye, WACD Legislative & Membership Lead
Roylene Comes at Night, NRCS Washington State Conservationist
Kirk Robinson, WSCC Interim Executive Director
Zorah Oppenheimer, Clark CD District Manager
Kenna Fosnacht, Lewis CD Resource Technician
Sarah Moorehead, Thurston CD Executive Director

President Dorner called the meeting to order at 6:05 and began the meeting with the official introduction of new area directors Lisa Zaborac and Marshall Stowe.

Southwest Area Highlight

Marshall Stowe spoke of Cowlitz and Wahkiakum CD's project tours and lack of immediate problems with district operations. Lisa Zaborac covered Grays Harbor and Pacific CDs and how impressed she was in district staff's work despite interruptions from weddings, newborns, and medical issues among the staff. She also spoke to the successful completion of a project to open Hoquiam River after being blocked off for 80 years. Zorah Oppenheimer shared the details of their new major program in "Poop Smart Clark" and the changing demographics of Clark County. Kenna Fosnacht reported on her work with Lewis County on the Voluntary Stewardship Program and the successful outreach from door-to-door connections. She answered questions about water right availability in the Chehalis and Cowlitz watershed, farmland succession planning, shift in crops, and farmland preservation. Doug Rushton and Sarah Moorehead highlighted several aquatic species habitat restoration projects in the district and some of the district's growth the last few years.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Fenn apologized for missing last month's meeting. He gave an update on the situation with the IRS return funds to WACD and his goals with the Association's new accountant. He also informed the board that Adams CD paid dues to the Association.

Partner Reports

Introduction of Kirk Robinson as Interim Executive Director on his first day. He commented on the many activities in the SW area and their results. He informed the Board on conversations with DC representative on the bipartisan infrastructure plan and potential federal fundings for the Sustainable Farms and Fields program, but was still getting settled in on his first day.

Roylene Comes at Night remarked on agency funding, the start of the new NRCS fiscal year, and the possibility of expanded budget programs. She spoke of the priorities for the NRCS Chief in urban agriculture, climate farming, and racial justice. She also shared the details of vaccine mandate effecting staffing levels and the goal of returning the office in March.

Bill Blake described the WADE conference schedule for 2022 and the conference planning.

Doug Rushton spoke as VP for the Conservation Society, asking participants to check out their website and activities. He also covered activities for NACD, including conference information and activities from their Resource Policy Groups.

Special Committee Reports

Ryan Baye formally presented the recommendations from the Joint Committee on Elections to the Board and the process involved in the committee's work.

Tom Salzer formally presented the DEI Special Committee's recommendation to the Board, in both a draft policy statement and a recommended timeline for additional actions over the next three years.

Both Ryan and Tom answered questions about the committees' process, what WACD resources would be required to implement both committee's recommendations, what happened if no resolutions on either topic came forward from the area association meetings, and how the recommendations were reached.

November Board Meeting Topics

Ryan Baye shared a list of potential topics already on the draft list for the November meeting and how much may come before the board that month. He briefly described the various issues and fielded questions on additional items for the November meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:31