



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
2008 Resolutions

Resolution No: 08-001

Title: Request that WACD supports the efforts of the conservation planning and district technical employee's development work group technical team in developing a standardized conservation plan format for the conservation districts of Washington State.

Problem:

Currently there are several different "Conservation Plan" formats in use in Washington State. Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans ("CNMPS") are required for livestock operations requesting EQIP cost share assistance. Planners are urged to use specific NRCS software to develop and organize plan elements. Dairy Nutrient Management Plans ("DNMPS") are required of all dairy producers with a class one license. While the format varies from district to district, the elements of the DNMP are set by statute (RCW 90.64). Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation ("CAFO") plans are different yet. CAFO plans are required of livestock operations that have had a "discharge". The US Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") and Washington State Department of Ecology, who oversee the CAFO program require some additional plan elements beyond either CNMP's or DNMP's. Farm Conservation Plans ("Plans") are required by some counties to protect critical areas or to afford protection from nuisance complaints under right to farm ordinances. Formats vary from checklists to narratives with minimum content necessary to achieve specific purposes. Finally, there are plans that cooperators voluntarily want to achieve their individual and personal stewardship goals. Format can vary markedly since the National Planning Procedures Handbook does not specifically prescribe how a conservation plan is to look but rather, what must be in a plan.

Recommendation:

WACD and the Conservation Commission will support the work of the Conservation Planning & District Technical Employees Development Work Group Technical Team in developing a standardized Conservation Plan Protocol and Format for the Conservation Districts of Washington State that maintains a minimum standard for content. The goal is to develop a consistent standard format that will easily expand from a small farm plan to incorporate the various special considerations of Specialty Plans (CNMP, DNMP, Forestry, etc.), while maintaining usefulness to the producer/landowner.

Resolution Passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
2008 Resolutions

Resolution No: 08-002

Title: Request That WACD and the WSCC support work to increase and document the technical proficiency of district planners.

Problem:

In the past, NRCS provided extensive training and oversight to District employees. This helped ensure the integrity of the planning process and quality of the plans produced. For budgetary and legal reasons, NRCS can no longer, respectively, provide all the training that is needed or certify proficiency through granting job approval authority. As NRCS staffing in Washington State has declined, the numbers of district employees has increased. The conservation planning paradigm has been embraced by legislators and agencies as an effective and economical means of reconciling the needs of individual landowners and the environment. With these substantial investments of taxpayer funds, has come an expectation that the technical services provided will meet the NRCS level of planning proficiency. The Commission is accountable for the dollars it passes through to districts. District Board and staff are accountable for the technical assistance they provide to cooperators. Most are motivated to deliver a high level of service. As one district technician wrote recently "The goal is to simply be and seen to be, highly educated, competent professionals with a consistent product and an enviable level of expertise in all facets of CD involvement".

Recommendation:

WACD and the Conservation Commission will support the work of the Conservation Planning & District Technical Employees Development Work Group in their effort to identify appropriate trainings, certifications, and other opportunities which will increase and demonstrate the proficiency of district staff.

Resolution passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
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Resolution No: 08-003

Title: Request that Washington Department of Ecology develop a program to grant temporary surface water rights to irrigate conservation district sponsored riparian restoration projects.

Problem:

Washington Department of Ecology funds riparian restoration projects intended to improve water quality. These projects require maintenance, including watering and controlling competing vegetation to get the desired native plants established. Many sites do not have ground water available for irrigation. In most cases, a large water tanker truck would not be able to access a site, and most conservation districts do not have such a vehicle or the budget to operate one. The most convenient and efficient method to irrigate riparian restoration projects is using a portable pump to withdraw water from the surface water next to the planting site. Water law requires that a water right be obtained prior to withdrawing surface water and many conservation district cooperators do not have surface water rights. The water right requirement makes it difficult, if not impossible, to legally irrigate most riparian restoration sites. Many riparian restoration projects suffer high mortality and ultimately fail because the plants are not watered the first several summers following planting.

Recommendation:

WACD and the Conservation Commission work with the Department of Ecology to see if Ecology is willing to make modifications to existing policies, or to develop a new one, to allow temporary surface water use for riparian restoration projects. This water use could be allowed through an emergency or temporary, expiring water right, or similar mechanism. The temporary water right would allow irrigation of the riparian restoration site for a period of three years following planting. The program would be available to conservation district cooperators statewide and would apply to all conservation district sponsored riparian restoration sites regardless of funding source. Recognizing that riparian restoration projects provide a net environmental benefit, the program would also apply to surface waters closed to further consumptive appropriations through "over-riding consideration of the public interest."

Resolution passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
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Resolution No: 08-004
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Title: Dig It: The Secrets of Soil and PEDS (People on Earth Dig Soil).

Problem:

Outreach and education staff from conservation districts (CDs) throughout the state of Washington request the support of the Washington State Conservation Commission, Washington CDs, Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD), and the Washington Association of District Employees to form collaborative partnerships to help support an effort to increase public awareness and knowledge about soil, which is an essential natural resource, in Washington state and the nation.

In 2010 the Pacific Science Center may be hosting the Smithsonian Institute's traveling exhibit, Dig It: The Secrets of Soil, which would be an incredible opportunity to promote this effort, which is being initiated because of the possibilities to engage the public of all ages and backgrounds and encourage public involvement throughout the state concerning the following topics:

- soil as a dynamic system, which is vital to human health, the environment, nutrition and food, feed, fiber, and fuel and agricultural production;
- the degradation of soil can be rapid, while the formation and regeneration processes can be very slow;
- protection of United States soil based on the principles of preservation and enhancement of soil functions, prevention of soil degradation, mitigation of detrimental use, and restoration of degraded soils is essential to the long-term prosperity of the United States;
- soil can be managed in a sustainable manner, which preserves its capacity to deliver ecological, economic, and social benefits, while maintaining its value for future generations;
- the sustainable use of soil affects climate, water and air quality, human health, biodiversity, food safety, and agricultural production;

We request WACD

1. Recognize it is necessary to improve knowledge, exchange information, and develop and implement best practices for soil management, soil restoration, carbon sequestration, and long-term use of Washington's soil resources and
2. Recognize the important role of CDs' soil educators and soils professionals, who are well-equipped with the information and experience needed to address the issues of today and those of tomorrow in managing Washington's soil resources.



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Objectives

1. Increase the number of CDs with public information and education programs on soil conservation.
2. Increase soil conservation educational activities and programs available for CDs to use.
3. Assist publishing, promoting, and marketing the CD concepts and activities about soil to the public on a statewide scale.

Strategies

- Develop and implement a successful targeted public outreach campaign around soil conservation that includes identification of key audiences, messages, and media. Reach land managers and citizens to change attitudes and behaviors toward conservation activities, planning, and practice application.
- Enhance the public education component beyond just farm planning, including educating citizens who have property with conservation needs.
- Raise community awareness of the need for food raised in a sustainable way. This includes participating in our partners' related programs.
- Increase public involvement and awareness of CDs by advertising and educational outreach.
- Increase soil education outreach to students, by using hands-on presentations and other youth conservation education opportunities.
- Build partnerships through networking with community groups and organizations and agencies involved with soil-related educational activities, programs and projects.

Resolution passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
2008 Resolutions

Resolution No: 08-005

Title: Pesticide Container Label Change.

Problem:

Background: Large quantities of plastic pesticide containers are used in Agriculture. Some of the used containers are disposed of properly by recycling, while others are delivered to landfills or burned. Improper disposal can pollute groundwater, compromise air quality, and affect our soils.

There is an active container recycling program in Washington State funded partially by registrants who sell pesticides. However, funding to continue the program is not 100% secure.

Users of pesticides could also easily be misled about the proper methods of container disposal after reading the label printed on the side of every pesticide container sold. The label states the following:

“Triple Rinse. Then offer for recycling or reconditioning, or puncture and dispose of in a sanitary landfill, or incineration, or, if allowed by state and local authorities, by burning.”

The EPA is responsible for this labeling. This language, at a minimum, gives the perception that using landfills and/or burning plastic is legal and safe, even though Washington State rules are more restrictive. However, if a farmer is led to believe burning used containers is legal, and then is caught by Washington Department of Ecology, they could be fined up to \$10,000 per offense.

Recommendation:

1. That WACD forward the issue of pesticide container recycling and disposal on to the national level (NACD) to lobby the EPA to remove the language on pesticide containers that suggests burning plastic pesticide containers.
2. That WACD work with the Washington Department of Ecology to continue to help fund Washington's pesticide container recycling program. Ecology would cover the difference between what registrants who sell pesticides pay into the program and what it costs to run the container recycling program, should a shortfall occur.

Resolution passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
2008 Resolutions

Resolution No: 08-006

Title: Public Works Project Administrative Procedures for Conservation Districts

Problem:

One of the primary functions of conservation districts is to promote, support, sponsor, and sometimes execute construction and improvement projects in order to conserve, protect, and restore natural resources and ecological functions. The administration of such projects may be regulated by the State Public Works Law (RCW 39.04) or federal contract procurement and administration laws if federal funds are utilized. However, guidelines for determining when conservation district-sponsored projects fall under the requirements of public works are often unclear, inconsistent or even contradictory. Furthermore, guidelines and checklists for compliance with applicable public works and federal contracting laws and regulations do not currently exist. Each conservation district is left to develop its own procedures to ensure compliance. This is inefficient and impracticable for most districts, thus many districts are left to learn how to comply with such laws and procedures on their own, and few districts have sufficient personnel and experience. This leaves them exposed to considerable liability and likely audit findings.

Recommendation:

Therefore, it is recommended that, WACD and WADE work with the WSCC to develop written procedures to aid conservation districts with compliance with public works laws and the administration of federal funding and provide appropriate training to conservation district employees.

Resolution passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
2008 Resolutions

Resolution No: 08-007

Title: Encouraging Timely Reimbursement from the Department of Ecology

Problem:

Districts are obligated to pay contractors, consultants, engineers, etc. usually within 30 days of receiving invoices. Delays of up to 60+ days for reimbursement from Ecology are unacceptable and cause undo hardship on the Districts and cooperators. Vendors and cooperators incur interest costs if they are not paid in a timely manner. Some Districts have had to transfer money from their reserves or savings to cover their costs before receiving payment from Ecology, resulting in lost interest earned. Districts are essentially floating a loan at a cost to them. Staffing levels and a shorthanded vacation season are legitimate excuses occasionally but not on an ongoing basis.

Recommendation:

WACD and the Commission work with the Department of Ecology to eliminate undo delays of grant reimbursement. Ecology should be encouraged to comply with their policy to issue payments of grant funds within 30 days of receipt of properly completed invoice vouchers.

Resolution passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
2008 Resolutions

Resolution No: 08-008

Title: Special Assessment Per Parcel Cap

Problem:

The Special Assessment rates including the per-parcel rate set in RCW 89.08.400 have not changed since the legislation was signed into law in April 1989 except for counties with a population over 1,500,000 where the per-parcel rate cap was doubled to \$10. Most districts without a large population base are still being attempting to serve counties with a very large land base with only half the potential assessment revenue. This seems discriminatory and counter-intuitive. The expense of providing conservation assistance and education has increased along with everything else during the past 19 years and yet the assessment rates have remained the same. This has made it difficult to maintain service levels while the demands on districts have increased exponentially.

Recommendation:

WACD working with the Washington Conservation Commission actively support an amendment to RCW 89.08.400 that would raise the per-parcel rate cap to \$10 for all districts without regard to population. It is not mandatory for any district to ask their county legislative authority to impose the assessment on their behalf and it would not be mandatory that any district that currently has the assessment to raise the assessment rate in their district. But an amendment to 89.08.400 would allow those districts that need additional revenue to meet operational demands to request an increase if they so desired.

Resolution failed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
2008 Resolutions

Resolution No: 08-009

Title: Increase district capacity for conducting cultural resource evaluations.

Problem:

Conservation Districts are implementing a variety of conservation projects that often involve soil disturbing activities. Cultural resource evaluations for most soil disturbing activities are required by funding sources, local permitting agencies, and for other reasons. Most Conservation Districts need to conduct these via contracts with registered archeologists. Many times these evaluations will cost several hundred to thousands of dollars for relatively small projects. More importantly, conducting the evaluations can add weeks and months to projects. This extra time and funding costs have caused the cancellation of some projects as too expensive or the funding gets taken away before the project can be completed.

Recommendation:

WACD should work with the Washington State Legislature, Washington State Conservation Commission, and Department of Archeology and Historical Preservation to implement a solution that expedites the process of cultural resource evaluations and decreases the costs borne by Districts.

Resolution passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
2008 Resolutions

Resolution No: 08-010

Title: WA State Certification of Soil and Wetland Scientists

Problem:

As it now stands in the state of Washington, there are no State oversights on soil and wetland scientists and the work they perform. In January of 2008, the Washington State Department of Licensing recommended through a sunrise review that the Legislature pursue certification of soil and wetland scientists

(<http://www.dol.wa.gov/about/reports/sunriseSoilScientist0108.pdf>)

The work customarily performed by soil and wetland scientists is critical to the overall conservation vision of conservation districts statewide. A proposal for a WA State issued certification (Title Act only) for soil and wetland scientists is currently under way. Proposed language of the bill is available at:

(http://soilscientistlicensing.com/Code%20Revisers%20version_August%202008_S-0032.1.pdf)

Other organizations in favor of WA State Certification of soil and wetland scientists include:

- Washington State Department of Ecology
- Washington Society of Professional Soil Scientists (WSPSS) www.ieway.com/wspss
- Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) www.soils.org (current national certification programs for Agronomists, Crop Advisors, and Soil Scientists and Classifiers)
- Association of Women Soil Scientists (AWSS) <http://www.womeninsoils.org>
- National Society of Consulting Soil Scientists (NSCSS) www.nscss.org
- National Technical Committee for Hydric Soils (USDA-NRCS NTCHS)
<http://soils.usda.gov/use/hydric/ntchs/>
- Far West Agribusiness Association <http://www.fwaa.org/>
- Consulting Soil Scientists of the Carolina's, Inc.

Further information can be found at: <http://soilscientistlicensing.com/>

Recommendation:

The Washington Association of Conservation Districts support the efforts of the Washington Society of Professional Soil Scientists (WSPSS) for the certification of soil and wetland scientists by the Washington State Department of Licensing and send a letter of support to Tim Riebe the president of the WSPSS.

Resolution passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
2008 Resolutions

Resolution No: 08-011

Title: Open Spaces Act for Wildlife Areas / Biodiversity.

Problem:

The Open Spaces Act in the State of Washington is designed to provide an incentive to landowners to keep lands in agriculture and forestry or other non-development use by taxing those properties at the "current use" value rather than market value. The act provides a lot of flexibility for counties to decide which uses qualify for the open spaces designation. Many counties have determined that only those lands which can show "agricultural or forestry revenue" will qualify for this exemption. Many landowners would maintain open space surrounding their farmlands for wildlife use and to preserve our valuable biodiversity but doing so will cause them to be ineligible for the Open Spaces designation. That would require the landowner to pay back 7 years of back taxes and to have future taxes based on what is often a much higher valuation. This can have the effect of encouraging development and discouraging the maintenance of valuable habitat and biodiversity.

Recommendation:

WACD will work with other interest groups and State Agencies to develop changes to the Open Spaces legislation that will require counties to work with the local CD in determining what lands have value as wildlife habitat and biodiversity, which would then be eligible to be enrolled in open space designation and tax rates.

Resolution passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
2008 Resolutions

Resolution No: 08-012

Title: Recognition of Conservation Districts' Changing Clientele in WACD, NACD, and WSCC Policy and Actions.

Problem:

The fastest growing issue faced by conservation districts is the cumulative effect of small acreage and urban landowners on natural resources. While giving this issue some attention, this reality is not being prioritized by the Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD), the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC).

Recommendation:

WACD, NACD and WSCC fully recognize this current and emerging impact on natural resources due to the increase in small acreage and urban landowners and recognize these issues as a significant concern in their policies, actions and budget proposals.

Resolution passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
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Resolution No: 08-013

Title: Manure and Public Health

Problem:

Local public health departments and health departments and health districts, under WACD 246-203-130*, have jurisdiction over “stable manure” in “populous districts”. The WACD requires implementation of irrelevant practices that do not use best available science.

Recommendation:

WACD work with the Conservation Commission and State Department of Health to amend WAC 246-203-130 (2) to read:

(2) In populous districts, manure must be managed according to USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Field Office Technical Guide practice standards and specifications in order to protect water quality.

Resolution passed.

***NOTES**

A. WAC 246-203-130 Keeping of Animals.

1. Any person, firm or corporation is prohibited from keeping or sheltering animals in such a manner that a condition resulting from same shall constitute a nuisance.
2. In populous districts, stable manure must be kept in a covered watertight pit or chamber and shall be removed at least once a week during the period from April 1st to October 1st and, during the other months, at intervals sufficiently frequent to maintain a sanitary condition satisfactory to the health officer. Manure on farms or isolated premises other than dairy farms need not be so protected and removed unless ordered by the health officer.
3. Manure shall not be allowed to accumulate in any place where it prejudicially affects any source of drinking water.

B. Clark County Board of Health definition of “populous district” in all areas located within the Urban Growth Boundary.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
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Resolution No: 08-014

Title: Forest Stewardship Assistance

Problem:

Family-owned, non-commercial forest lands comprise more than half of the private forest lands in Washington State. The health and productivity of forest lands is essential to the State's economy.

Just like any other crop, timber must be actively managed to maximize yields and forest health. Good forest stewardship is a significant expense to the landowner.

Recommendation:

The Ferry Conservation District requests support in an effort to assist the landowner in meeting these costs, and to request additional assistance from the State of Washington to help landowners meet the costs of good forest stewardship.

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Resolution passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
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Resolution No: 08-015

Title: Separate Fish Passage Standards

Problem:

Small forest landowners own 4.2 million acres of Washington's forests—about half the private forestland in the State. These family forests are important to fish, and include thousands of miles of fish-bearing streams. A major key to restoring fish populations is removing barriers to fish passage.

A single artificial barrier on a stream can keep fish from reaching many miles of habitat upstream. State Forest Practices Rules require forest landowners to address fish barriers by 2016 to help protect fish. Eliminating fish passage barriers can be costly, especially for the family forest landowner. The 2003 Washington Legislature established the Family Forest Fish Passage Program (House Bill 1095), a bill that, in general, requires:

- ◆ The state create a cost-share program that provides 75-100 percent of the cost of correcting small forest landowners' fish barriers;
- ◆ Small forest landowners enrolling in the program are required to fix their barriers only if financial assistance is available from the State;
- ◆ Barriers be prioritized and repaired on a worst-first basis.

The program currently uses one set of fish passage guidelines for all waters in the State, requiring any FFFPP-sponsored project to meet passage standards for migrating salmon. However, there are no migrating salmon in any watershed upstream from Grand Coulee Dam. Constructing fish passage for salmon where none exists is costly and wasteful of public resources.

Recommendation:

Advocate standards appropriate to the fish and hydrology that inhabit the blocked stream.

Resolution passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
2008 Resolutions

Resolution No: 08-016A

Title: WACD support efforts for the allocation of an additional 50,000 acres to the State Acres For wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) program by the USDA in Washington State.

Problem:

Washington State faces the potential for the listing of several species on the Federal Endangered Species Act as threatened or endangered. Landowners are providing significant conservation benefits on working lands through their participation in USDA Farm Bill programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program, Grassland Reserve Program, and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program. There remains a need for additional conservation measures to help sustain these species of concern in an effort to prevent their need to be listed as threatened or endangered. SAFE is a new program that prioritizes enrollment of cropland into conservation cover based upon benefits to these sensitive species in a similar way that CRP prioritized cropland for soil erosion. The initial allotment in the state of 8,300 acres in the SAFE program will make a difference but a significant increase in the SAFE acreage in Washington State is needed.

Recommendation:

WACD support efforts to secure an additional allocation of up to 50,000 SAFE acres from the USDA for all counties with CRP eligible acres in Washington State within the next year.

Resolution passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
2008 Resolutions

Resolution No: 08-016B

Title: WACD and NACD support efforts to increase the USDA State Acres For wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) program in The United States to one million acres.

Problem:

In many corners of The United States, there exists the potential for the listing of several species on the Federal Endangered Species Act as threatened or endangered. Landowners are providing significant conservation benefits on working lands through their participation in USDA Farm Bill programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program, Grassland Reserve Program, and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program. There remains a need for additional conservation measures to help sustain these species of concern in an effort to prevent their need to be listed as threatened or endangered. SAFE is a new program that prioritizes enrollment of cropland into conservation cover based upon benefits to these sensitive species in a similar way that CRP prioritized cropland for soil erosion. The initial allotment in the country of 500,000 acres in the SAFE program will make a difference but a significant increase in the SAFE acreage in The United States is needed.

Recommendation:

WACD and NACD support efforts to secure from the USDA an increase to one million SAFE acres in The United States within the next year.

Resolution passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
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Resolution No: 08-017

Title: Additional bio-fuels and feedstock crop for Washington farmers.

Problem:

Current Federal law does not allow the use of industrial hemp in any agricultural uses.

Recommendation:

WACD should encourage NACD, and any state legislation, toward removing regulation prohibiting the use of industrial hemp in agricultural production, processing or rotation crop in Washington State.

Resolution passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
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Resolution No: 08-018

Title: NRCS work with WACD to develop operating guidelines for the LWG process.

Recommendation:

NRCS work with WACD to develop operating guidelines for the LWG process.

Resolution passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
2008 Resolutions

Resolution No: 08-019

Title: Assistance from Partners to Develop CD Administrative Protocols

Problem/Opportunity:

Conservation Districts (CD'S) in the State of Washington have evolved in the past 20 years from relatively low fiscal responsibility and few if any employees to entities with annual budgets in the hundreds of thousands of dollars and complex staffing plans. In many cases administrative/managerial development has not kept pace with the growth of responsibility. Across the State there is little or no consistency in neither CD employee development nor personnel policy. In addition, there is little or no consistency in CD administrative policy from CD to CD across the state. There is no "Human Resources" (HR) officer CD's can go to ensure fair and just treatment and management of staff. There is no "Administrative Officer" (AO) CD's can go to for interpretation and development of fiscal policy.

Conservation District partners including USDA/NRCS, WA Conservation Commission, WA Department of Ecology, and others do have well established HR and AO staff as well as 'tested' processes. The 'Partners' technical staffs traditionally have worked hand in hand with the CD's to 'put conservation on the ground.' However, given their administrative capabilities, there is an opportunity to glean guidance from them toward development or improvement of CD administrative capability.

Recommendation:

WACD will consult and work with the above noted partners as well as the Washington Association of District Employees to develop consistent personnel and administrative policy guidelines by the end of the fiscal year. These guidelines will serve as an umbrella/tool which individual CD's can use to adapt to their specific needs.

Resolution passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
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Resolution No: 08-020

Title: Power to the People (Farmers)

Problem:

The biggest impediment to converting from diesel to electric motors is the high cost of installing power lines. There are no incentive programs to help bring power lines to farmers. Diesel exhaust contains tiny particles that pose a significant health risk and contribute to haze, which restricts visibility. Diesel exhaust also contributes to ozone formation (a component of smog), acid rain, and global climate change. Older stationary diesel engines used for farm pumping or power generation have the highest level of these emissions. In comparison, electric motors are cheaper, more efficient to operate, and do not have these harmful effects on humans and the environment.

Recommendation:

WACD will work with WSCC to create an incentive program to convert stationary diesel engines to electric motors through a cost share incentive program that reimburses farmers for a portion of the cost of installing power lines where none exist.

Resolution passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
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Resolution No: 08-021

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Title: Capricorn CREP – Site Preparation and Maintenance with Sheep & Goats, and other Appropriate Livestock

Problem:

There is evidence that there could be significant economic and environmental benefit to using sheep or goats, or whatever livestock fits the circumstances for site preparation and maintenance of CREP projects. Pesticides are increasingly expensive due to the increase in the cost of fossil fuel. The US Department of Fish & Wildlife and NOAA Fisheries limit what and where they can be used due to the potential hazard to listed species. Conservation districts are admonished by the US Department of Fish and Wildlife to use the least toxic weed control methods as a first choice. More and more CREP participants also wish to limit the use of chemicals on their projects. This makes it difficult to establish and maintain the projects.

Current USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) rules prohibit grazing on CRP except in very, very limited circumstances such as a serious drought. This is because program participants have been compensated to idle the property. It is thought to be double dipping to be able to make use of the fodder on the site. However, there is a rational distinction to be drawn regarding grazing to prepare or maintain a CREP project versus grazing done merely to provide feed (profit) to the program participant. Individuals involved in providing sheep, goats, and whatever livestock fits the circumstances for clearing activities are small business owners comparable to those that are hired to clear vegetation using herbicide and mechanical mowing.

There are some potential resource concerns when livestock graze in sensitive areas. These can be adequately addressed through the application of NRCS FOTG practices. There is also a potential biosecurity hazard, i.e., the transmission of worms to wildlife. This can be addressed through good animal husbandry.

Recommendation:

WACD will request FSA and the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) to authorize field trials to study the utilization of sheep or goats, or whatever livestock fits the circumstances as either a site preparation or maintenance tool for CREP and CRP projects with the following limitations:

1. The CREP and CRP program participant could not provide the sheep, or goats, or other livestock, or receive any remuneration whatsoever.
2. Grazing would be implemented pursuant to a conservation plan following NRCS FOTG practices to ensure protection of sensitive areas and the project's native trees and shrubs.
3. Goats, sheep, and other livestock are susceptible to infectious diseases that can be transmitted to wildlife. The herd would be examined on the farm of origin by an accredited veterinarian and approved for transport.
4. Conservation district staff would monitor the trial closely and halt it if necessary to avoid any substantial negative impacts. They would prepare a report to FSA, NRCS, and WSCC as to its findings and recommendations.

Resolution passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
2008 Resolutions

Resolution No: 08-022

Title: Change the overhead percentage received from the NRCS/ Washington State Conservation Commission that pays the districts for TSP contract from 10% to 25%.

Problem:

The current rate paid to conservation districts by the NRCS/WSCC TSP program is 10% of the salaries and benefits. This is a very low return to the districts in comparison to other programs (grants both from the commission, the district budget and DOE) which typically allow a rate of 25% of salaries and benefits for overhead in their programs. The amount received from the current TSP program barely allows this program to cover district costs and does not allow for any increase of capacity for the districts.

Recommendation:

The WACD should support an action to increase the overhead payment from 10% to 25% of salaries and benefits from the NRCS/WCC TSP program to increase capacity to the districts.

Resolution passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
2008 Resolutions

Resolution No: 08-023

Title: Support for Washington State Conservation Commission as an Independent Agency

Problem:

As the State of Washington considers "Government Transformation" options in the face of the current fiscal challenges, the idea to consolidate agencies is usually part of the discussion. One potential is the consolidation of the Conservation Commission into another agency. Past ideas by the State to consolidate the Conservation Commission were met with adamant opposition by stakeholders statewide. The independence of the Conservation Commission protects the voluntary, incentive-based approach used by Conservation Districts to work with landowners. Conservation Districts are not linked in any way to the regulatory mandates that many of the other State Agencies have to enforce.

Recommendation:

The WACD should advocate for and support the continued independence of the WSCC as an agency of the State of Washington. The Washington State Conservation Commission would continue to provide support for Conservation Districts and act as a granting entity for Conservation Districts.

Resolution Passed.



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
2008 Resolutions

Resolution No: 08-024

Title: Water Conservation Use on the Columbia River

Problem:

WHEREAS, There is a high demand for new water supplies and irrigated agriculture products,
and

WHEREAS, There is a real need to make RCW 90.90 and conservation work for new irrigated
agriculture water uses, and

WHEREAS, Irrigation water management provides real seasonal water savings, and

WHEREAS, Water savings from irrigation water management may be subject to relinquishment,
and

WHEREAS, Irrigation water management conservation savings currently do not have a process
to be recognized and efficiently utilized, and

WHEREAS, a healthy, growing agricultural economy is important to the entire State of
Washington:

Recommendation:

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved, that the WACD adopt a policy position supporting legislation
being proposed that would allow seasonal transfers of water saved by using irrigation water management
and direct the WACD Executive Director and the WACD Lobbyist to provide written or oral support at any
legislative hearing being conducted on legislation addressing this issue.

Resolution failed. (18/32)



Washington Association of Conservation Districts
2008 Resolutions

Resolution No: 08-025

Title: Using Conserved Water from the Columbia River Mainstem

Problem:

WHEREAS, There is a high demand for new water supplies and irrigated agriculture products,
and

WHEREAS, There is a real need to make RCW 90.90 (Columbia River Legislation) and
conservation work for new irrigated agriculture water uses, and

WHEREAS, Irrigation water management provides real seasonal water savings, and

WHEREAS, Water savings from irrigation water management may be subject to relinquishment,
and

WHEREAS, Irrigation water management conservation savings currently do not have a process
to be recognized and efficiently utilized, and

WHEREAS, a healthy, growing agricultural economy is important to the entire State of
Washington:

Recommendation:

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved, that the WACD adopt a policy position supporting legislation
specific to the mainstem Columbia River under RCW 90.90, which may be proposed, that would allow
seasonal transfers of water saved by using irrigation water management and direct the WACD Executive
Director and the WACD Lobbyist to provide written or oral support at any legislative hearing being
conducted on legislation addressing this issue.

Resolution passed.