

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Summary of December Board Actions

Motion: Alan Chapman moved to adopt the agenda as presented, seconded by Mary Collins. Motion carried.

Follow-Up Action Items:

- Survey supervisors to ascertain interest and barriers to serving on the WACD Board (led by Heather Wendt, Sarah Moorehead, and Cindy Schaeffer).
- Make a recommendation to Managers/Executive Directors to add the Five Things to Know Newsletter to their board packets every month. (led by Sarah Moorehead)
- Create a list of responsibilities/opportunities for Area Directors (led by Tom Salzer and Ryan Baye)
- Create a “What does WACD do for me” document that can be updated and shared with supervisors. (led by Heather Wendt)
- Create a value proposition statement on why supervisors should invest time serving on the WACD board. (led by Heather Wendt)

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Northern Quest Resort and Casino and with a remote connection through Zoom

December 1, 2025

Board Meeting Minutes

Members Present

Amy McKay, President (Whitman CD)
Jeff Schibel, Vice-President (Lincoln County CD)
Mark Craven, Treasurer (Snohomish CD)
Doug Rushton, National Director (Thurston CD)
Alan Chapman, Northwest Area Director (Whatcom CD)
David Vliet, Northwest Area Director (Kitsap CD)
Bruce McDonald, Southwest Area Director (Lewis CD)
Heather Smith, Southwest Area Director (Grays Harbor CD)
John McLean, North Central Area Director (Foster Creek CD)
John Preston, North Central Area Director (Columbia Basin CD)
Cindy Reed, South Central Area Director (North Yakima CD)
Mary Collins, Southeast Area Director (Palouse CD)
Sarah Moorehead, WADE Co-President (Thurston CD)

Others Present

Tom Salzer, WACD Executive Director
Heather Wendt, WACD Deputy Director
Jim Brown, WACD PMC
Roylene Comes At Night, NRCS

Nick Vira, NRCS
Cyndi Schaeffer, Snohomish CD
TJ Johnson, Thurston CD
Brad Bortner, Wahkiakum CD
Linda Lyshall, Snohomish CD
Stephen Allen, Pend Oreille CD

President McKay called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM. Heather conducted a roll call to confirm a quorum was present. Alan Chapman moved to adopt the agenda as presented, seconded by Mary Collins. The motion carried.

Public Comment Period

No public comment was received.

Conflict of Interest Form

Heather Wendt reported that it was once again time to sign new conflict of interest forms. The form is located in the Supervisor Policy Manual and was handed out to in-person attendees.

Employee Health Insurance

Heather Wendt reported that, after reviewing plan options, we have elected to continue with Kaiser based on the recommendation of our insurance broker. We are adding employees to the plan, and in doing so, our rates are only expected to increase approximately 1%. Staff does not anticipate the need to amend the budget, but should the need arise, we will bring that request before the board in January.

Board Retreat

Board Composition

The board discussed the current board composition of two directors from each area and the challenges of filling vacancies. Overall, the board felt that having two representatives from each area allowed greater representation. The question arose, "Have we surveyed why people haven't participated?"

Supervisors need to see the value in being board members at the state level. Current board members listed the value of participating as:

- If you aren't at the table, you are part of the meal. Which translates to: if you don't have a voice in decisions, you're subject to the outcomes, which could be negative depending on your perspective.
- Opportunity to contribute skills and to learn ideas from others that you can bring back to your CD.
- People need to understand that WACD acts as the voice for districts to the legislature.

We need to educate supervisors on what WACD does and our values. Being clear about our values may increase participation. Ideas to increase supervisor knowledge about what we do included:

- Make a recommendation to Managers/Executive Directors to add the Five Things to Know newsletter to their board packets every month. (led by Sarah Moorehead)
- Create a list of responsibilities/opportunities for Area Directors (led by Tom Salzer and Ryan Baye)
- Create a “What does WACD do for me” document that can be updated and shared with supervisors. (led by Heather Wendt)
- Create a value proposition statement on why supervisors should invest time serving on the WACD board. (led by Heather Wendt)

WACD Resources

The board discussed WACD’s resources and how we use them to meet the needs of districts. The need for a data aggregation tool was discussed to be able to collectively measure and report the impact of work done by CDs. Heather reported that this effort is underway, and three CDs have been working with the Science HUB to pilot a tool that will do just that.

Also discussed was the need to have thoughtful conversations about how we help CDs that are struggling to keep their doors open. An update to the dues structure was also discussed.

Sustainable Funding Committee

The work of WACD’s Sustainable Funding Committee was discussed. Concerns were raised about Washington State’s regressive tax system and how increasing the sales tax would have a disproportionate impact on lower-income earners. As a reminder, it was pointed out that all the grant money we receive from state and federal agencies is tax money. If conservation districts were funded by a tax, it would raise more awareness of who and what CDs are. REET was discussed as a potentially less regressive option, especially if the higher sales bracket was taxed at a greater rate.

Relationship Between SCC & CDs

There are challenges with the legislature putting sideboards on funding. State agencies in general are bureaucracies. SCC is trying to be relevant to CDs and partners. We want and need SCC to succeed so CDs succeed. Providing meeting minutes of SCC/CD workgroup meetings will provide transparency of the process and greater overall awareness of the work being done among the CD community.

The board expressed a desire to minimize verbal updates in favor of written updates at WACD board meetings in 2026 to leave time for more thoughtful discussions.

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 AM.