



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

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**2017 WACD Annual Meeting Resolutions**

<b>Resolution</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Author/District</b>	<b>Committee Assigned</b>
2017-03	Prioritizing Washington State's Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)	Spokane Conservation District	Natural Resources Policy Committee
2017-04	CRP Mid-Management Considerations During Natural Disasters Such as Drought, Fires, Floods, etc.	Benton Conservation District	Natural Resources Policy Committee
2017-05	CRP Bid Points for $\leq$ 12 Inch Precipitation Zones	Benton Conservation District	Natural Resources Policy Committee
2017-07	Addressing State Policy on Water Quantity and Availability	John Keatley, Cowlitz CD	Legislative, Bylaws & District Policies Committee
2017-09	Changing Washington State Conservation Commission Grant Addendum Signatory	Okanogan Conservation District	Legislative, Bylaws & District Policies Committee
2017-10	Incentives and State Water Quality Law	Stevens County Conservation District	Legislative, Bylaws & District Policies Committee
2017-11	Eliminate taxation on Conservation District owned Real Property	North Yakima Conservation District	Legislative, Bylaws & District Policies Committee
2017-12	Support Secure Rural Schools Re-Authorization Act	Okanogan Conservation District	



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**Resolution No. 2017-03**

**Title:** Prioritizing Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

**Problem:**

Conservation Districts across the state have embraced the concept of partnering with NRCS to implement the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. CDs have applied for and been granted millions of dollars through this program to help with the implementation of NRCS conservation programs in watersheds across the state of Washington to put target conservation on the ground.

Though the contracts have been different for each accepted RCPP program, the results have been very similar especially in the Palouse RCPP and the Spokane River RCPP. Districts have worked directly with producers to accept applications for the voluntary implementation of conservation practices through the EQIP and CSP programs. However, the process has been stricken with a lack of interest, priority, and artificial bureaucracy to the extent that these programs are losing the participation and trust of producers. This latency is costing producers valuable time, equipment expenses, and most importantly trust in their District and local NRCS offices.

NRCS has been granted hundreds of thousands of dollars from these RCPP contracts to hire the appropriate staff to adequately manage the program at a local level and help producers implement the practices. This hiring has not been accomplished and current staff is being overwhelmed with existing programs and the RCPP workload to the extent that the RCPP applicants are waiting for 10-24 months to get contracts for their practices.

**Recommendation:**

NACD supports NRCS making RCPP programs an equitable priority by utilizing funding from the program to find, select, and hire qualified staff and to streamline the job approval process.

**Presented by:** Spokane Conservation District

Approved by the Northeast Association on 10/19/17

Assigned To: Natural Resources Policy Committee

Recommended DO PASS AS AMENDED on 11/28/17

Passed on 11/28/17



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**Resolution No. 2017-04**

**Title:** CRP Mid-Management Considerations During Natural Disasters Such as Drought, Fires, Floods, etc.

**Problem:**

Existing CRP stands that meet the requirements of the contracts signed by producers may be severely damaged or destroyed by natural disasters such as drought, fire, floods, etc. These events may occur after mid-management practices have been implemented and late in the contract life. Producers suffering from these conditions may not have options to regain compliance prior the end of the contract period. These places producers in jeopardy of having their contract cancelled due to the lack of meeting standard requirements. In some cases, re-payment of previous contract payments are required by FSA.

**Recommendation:**

WACD and NACD support the Farm Service Agency in changing or enhancing CRP mid-management conservation practices in the case of natural disasters that severely damage previously established CRP standards.

**Presented by:** Benton Conservation District

Approved by the South-Central Association on 10/26/17

Assigned To: Natural Resources Policy Committee

Recommended DO PASS AS AMENDED on 11/28/17

Passed on 11/29/17



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**Resolution No. 2017-05**

**Title:** CRP Bid Points for  $\leq$  12 Inch Precipitation Zones

**Problem:**

The air monitoring station in Kennewick has recorded 7 pm<sub>10</sub> exceedances in the last 5 years due to drought conditions. The situation would be much worse if not for the quantity of acreage enrolled in CRP in Benton and Klickitat Counties. A significant amount of CRP contract acreage is set to expire in 2018 & 2019. Because of a reduction in the size of the pm<sub>10</sub> air quality area due to the shifting of CRP acreage to the SAFE programs, much of the expiring contract acreage will not derive enough bid points to be re-enrolled in CRP. This will ultimately result in more pm<sub>10</sub> emissions and could ultimately result in Benton County and surrounding areas being designated as a non-attainment area for air quality concerns. Human health should not be sacrificed for wildlife goals.

**Recommendation:**

WACD and NACD support the allocation of higher bid points to CRP for farmland that is located in 12 inches or below precipitation zones to address air quality concerns.

**Presented by:** Benton Conservation District

Approved by the South-Central Association on 10/26/17  
Assigned To: Natural Resources Policy Committee  
Recommended DO PASS AS AMENDED on 11/28/17  
Passed on 11/29/17



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**Resolution No. 2017-07**

**Title:** Addressing State Policy on Water Quantity and Availability

**Problem:**

The Hirst Decision, and other state Supreme Court Decisions have invalidated the Department of Ecology's current processes, including water availability, under western water law and Washington State statutes.

The State Supreme Court decision in the Hirst case has resulted in serious challenges statewide, especially in rural Washington. It is a matter of time before water quantity and availability captures the attention of urban Washington.

Water quantity and availability, as public policy, is so important that WACD and WSCC must voice the need for a legislative solution.

This resolution would not impact existing water rights.

**Recommendation:**

Propose a resolution for WACD and WSCC to create a recommendation and support a legislative solution to ensure water availability through reliable, predictable, equitable processes.

**Presented by:** John Keatley, Cowlitz Conservation District

Approved by the Southwest Area Association on 10/10/17

Assigned To: Legislative, Bylaws & District Policies Committee

Recommended DO PASS AS AMENDED on 11/28/17

Passed on 11/29/17



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**Resolution No. 2017-09**

**Title:** Changing Washington State Conservation Commission Grant Addendum Signatory.

**Problem:**

The Washington State Conservation Commission requires grant addendums to be singularly approved by the Board of Supervisors during a public meeting. While it is critical that each Board knows the scope of work for grants and contracts, waiting for a public meeting or holding a special meeting to approve contracts can place undue burdens on the implementation of grants. Further, some Districts have authorized staff, usually the District Manager or similar staff to approve some or all grant contracts.

The ability of District staff, where authorized by their Board of Supervisors, to execute contracts and agreements is one method for increasing the administrative efficiency of program delivery. Further, the decision to whom can executive such agreements should stay with the recipient and not be mandated by an outside entity.

Further, the Washington State Conservation Commission already requires the submission of an authorized signature form for approval to sign the master contract, approve certain timesheets, travel vouchers, and invoice vouchers, and grad close out forms among other documents. Adding a section for approval of grant addendums would be a simple solution.

**Recommendation:**

WACD will work with the Washington State Conservation Commission and all Washington Conservation Districts to improve grant submission and management processes. Specific attention will be paid to districts authority to designate authorized representatives to submit grant addendums, better notification of authorization to proceed and incur expenses, and document of receipt of grant administrative files.

**Presented by:** Okanogan Conservation District

Approved by the North Central Association on 10/17/17

Assigned To: Legislative, Bylaws & District Policies Committee

Recommended DO PASS on 11/28/17

Passed on 11/29/17



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**Resolution No. 2017-10**

**Title:** Incentives and State Water Quality Law

**Problem:**

Many environmental groups and agencies are voicing opinions that agricultural, non-point water quality improvements and protections are not being made fast enough through voluntary incentive programs. Another concern that has been voiced is that such water quality incentive programs are ineffective.

Additionally, the majority of funding for non-point voluntary incentive programs is held and controlled by the regulatory authority. This has resulted in challenges when attempting to utilize these funds for projects with landowners. Examples of these challenges:

- Many landowners are not comfortable voluntarily working with regulatory agencies and individuals who have enforcement authority.
- The conditions attached to working with funding from a regulatory agency are often unacceptable to the landowner.

Non-point water quality protection is further complicated by the fact that the Washington State Conservation Districts do not have stable funding to provide consistent high quality technical and financial assistance for water quality incentive programs to landowners. There is not clear acceptance of BMPs and suites of BMPs acceptable to regulatory agencies to achieve state standards.

**Recommendation:**

WACD will work with WSCC, ECY, and the Legislature and amend the current state water quality statute to include a policy statement regarding the role of agricultural water quality incentive programs and the Conservation Commission to be the lead for voluntary non-regulatory programs protecting water quality.

**Presented by:** Stevens County Conservation District

Approved by the Northeast Association on 10/19/17

Assigned To: Legislative, Bylaws & District Policies Committee

Recommended DO PASS AS AMENDED on 11/28/17

Passed on 11/29/17



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**Resolution No. 2017-11**

**Title:** Eliminate taxation on Conservation District owned Real Property

**Problem:**

Currently the tax code of Washington State does not provide exemption to Conservation District's on Real Property like other governmental agencies enjoy. The result is reduced Conservation District funds for implementation of critical Natural Resource Programs.

**Recommendation:**

WACD will work with WSCC to enforce the real property tax exemption that all municipal corporations are entitled to by state constitution.

**Presented by:** North Yakima Conservation District

Approved by the South-Central Association on 10/26/17

Assigned To: Legislative, Bylaws & District Policies Committee

Recommended DO PASS on 11/28/17

Passed on 11/29/17



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**Resolution No. 2017-12**

**Title:** Support Secure Rural Schools Re-Authorization Act

**Problem:**

The Secure Rural Schools Re-Authorization Act (HR 2340) is a bill before the US House of Representatives with companion legislation in the US Senate (S 1027) that would extend the authorization and funding for critical funding to rural communities affected by loss of revenues from federally managed lands. These funds are commonly referred to as Payment In Lieu of Tax or PILT payments made by the federal government to counties with federal lands that do not generate property taxes.

The funds provided in this act help local communities offset the costs of maintaining services and utilities for the benefit of the public. One of the critical components in this legislation is Title III funds. Title III funds may be used for two purposes. The first is for search and rescue costs generally used by county authorities to assist with the search and rescue of persons using or recreating on federal lands. The other authorized expense is to be used for Firewise education and fuels reductions on lands adjacent to and near federal lands.

Title III funds are used by local jurisdictions, including many conservation districts under contract from their county legislative authority, to perform Firewise education events, conduct property evaluations for fire risks, and where appropriate and allowed to cost-share on the removal of fire fuels to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires in the wildland-urban interface.

**Recommendation:**

NACD supports the passage and full funding of the Secure Rural Schools Re-Authorization Act in both the US House of Representatives and Senate to facilitate the maintenance of wildfire control funds.

**Presented by:** Okanogan Conservation District

Passed on 11/29/17