



# Washington State Conservation Commission

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## Meeting Packet

*May 20, 2026*

### *Strategic Planning Session*

**\*\*This meeting will be held virtually via Zoom.  
Options to participate in-person are available\***

*Zillah, Washington*

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#### ***Our Mission:***

***“To conserve natural resources on all lands in Washington State, through voluntary and incentive-based programs, in collaboration with conservation districts and other partners.”***

## SCC Strategic Planning Workshop

Zillah, Washington

### Time

Please note that the times listed below are estimated and may vary. [Please visit the SCC website for the most up-to-date meeting information.](#)

### Meeting Accommodations

Persons with a disability needing an accommodation to participate in SCC public meetings should call Lori Gonzalez at 360-791-0226 or call 711 relay service. All accommodation requests should be received no later than May 12, 2026, to ensure preparations are appropriately made.

### Online Meeting Coordinates

To participate online, please click on [this link](#) to register. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting virtually. You may use your computer audio, or dial into the meeting using the information provided after logging in. Guests will be muted by the host upon login to allow for full discussion by Commissioners.

### Strategic planning workshop explanation

This workshop is formatted to allow for dialogue between commissioners to set the strategic direction for the agency. It is not a regular business meeting, and no formal action or public comment will be taken during this workshop.

TIME	ITEM	FACILITATOR
8:30 a.m.	<b>Call to Order/Welcome</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roll call and introductions</li> </ul>	Chair Kearney
8:40 a.m.	<b>Agenda overview</b>	Jessica Wilson, Chief Engagement Officer
8:45 a.m.	<b>Section one: the big picture</b>  <b>Vision</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?</i></li> <li><i>What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?</i></li> </ol>	Commissioner discussion

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- 3) *How would you describe the purpose of our agency in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?*

### **Mission and innovation**

- 4) *What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?*
- 5) *If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?*
- 6) *What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?*

### **Values**

- 7) *What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)*
- 8) *How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?*

### **Goals and legacy**

- 9) *What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?*
- 10) *If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?*

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**10:30 a.m.**

**15-minute break**

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**10:45 a.m.**

### **Section two: how do we align our work?**

Commissioner  
discussion

- a) In the absence of specific proviso language directing funds be spent a certain way, how should SCC allocate funding?
1. Should each conservation district receive the same amount?
    - i. If yes, then how do we ensure we can account for how funds were spent back to the legislature/the public? Advocate for more?
    - ii. If no, then how do we prioritize competing local needs?
- b) How do we make sure our funding is being spent effectively?
- c) How do we balance the need for flexibility within our funding for conservation districts with the need to promote fairness and equality at the same time?
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1. How do we create more flexibility while balancing the need for transparency and public process when it comes to creating or changing our policies?
- d) How do we balance state priorities for programs with conservation district priorities for programs when they are at odds?
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**12:00 p.m. One-hour lunch break**

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**1:00 p.m. Section three: effectiveness and flexibility**

Commissioner discussion

- a) Should SCC continue to fund projects with a discrete list of eligible BMPs, or move to an outcomes-based (programs) approach for funding conservation districts?
1. If outcomes-based, what are the key guiding principles for evaluating whether a conservation district is making progress toward their outcome (i.e. subbasin or reach scale, geographical, etc.)?
- b) To increase funding flexibility, we will need to increase accountability to ensure Washingtonians know, understand, and champion the work the State Conservation Commission is accomplishing. What key accountability measures are most important to track?
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**2:15 p.m. 15-minute break**

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**2:30 p.m. Section four: Partnerships with agencies and organizations**

Commissioner discussion

- a) What is SCC's role in working together with other state and federal partners to accomplish conservation work across Washington?
- b) How can SCC better define the agency's role within the framework of WACD, WADE, and conservation districts?
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**3:30 p.m. Section five: SCC's role in supporting district operations**

Commissioner discussion

- a) RCW defines SCC's role in providing oversight on district operations; this role is fulfilled by Regional Managers. This role has been shaped over the years as an advisory function.
1. Is the advisory function adequate to support the plans outlined in the earlier part of the day's conversations?
  2. Is there a place for an increased accountability role, especially in the CAPP process?
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**4:20 p.m. Overview of next steps and adjourn**

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# Executive Summary: 2026 SCC Strategic Planning Survey

The 2026 Strategic Planning survey was deployed during the first week of May 2026 to provide commissioners input from the community. The below narrative weaves together insights from conservation district managers, supervisors, SCC staff, state and federal partners, and other collaborators. The following information reflects the big-picture themes and perspectives from the survey.

## Big-picture takeaway

Respondents overwhelmingly urged SCC to reinforce its foundational role: supporting a strong, locally led, voluntary conservation system.

They expressed broad confidence in the value of voluntary conservation while emphasizing the need for SCC to modernize internal systems, rebuild trust, and secure long-term operational stability.

## Key themes

### Modernizing SCC's systems is the most urgent priority

The most consistent theme across all respondent groups is the need to overhaul SCC's foundational systems, particularly within grant and IT processes. Many described these systems as outdated, burdensome, slow, and inconsistent.

Respondents highlighted the need for:

- A modern, user-friendly grant management system
- Multi-biennium contracting
- Reduced administrative burden
- More consistent guidance and faster turnaround
- Replacement or major overhaul of CPDS (with PRISM noted as a possible model)

This modernization is viewed as essential to SCC's future success.

## Rebuilding trust and strengthening relationships

Many district leaders and SCC staff expressed concerns that the relationship between SCC and conservation districts has drifted toward formality, compliance, or top-down control. Respondents want SCC to:

- Re-establish a “true partnership” between conservation districts and SCC staff so both conservation districts and SCC feel respected and part of the solution.
- Improve responsiveness and transparency
- Value local expertise
- Ensure feedback processes are meaningful and lead to action

A return to shared leadership between the commission and conservation districts as well as mutual trust was described as critical.

## Stable, sustainable, flexible funding for all conservation districts

Respondents emphasized that reliable, flexible funding is essential to maintaining voluntary conservation statewide. Responses included calls for:

- Permanent operational capacity funding
- Support for basic staffing needs (administration, technical assistance, outreach, monitoring)
- Reduced administrative hurdles so more time can go toward conservation delivery
- SCC serving as a strong advocate for stable, statewide funding

## SCC’s most inspiring strength

SCC’s most inspiring strength is its unique ability to provide statewide leadership, consistency, and credibility for voluntary conservation—powered by a dedicated, knowledgeable, and collaborative staff. SCC serves as a trusted convener and champion for voluntary, non-regulatory conservation, bridging local needs with statewide goals in a way no other agency can.

Many responses reframed this question to highlight the strengths of conservation districts, noting that the agency exists to serve conservation districts.

## The need for better data, metrics, and GIS information

Respondents repeatedly emphasized the need for SCC to strengthen its capacity to measure, map, and communicate the outcomes of voluntary conservation.

Priorities include:

- Modernized data systems
- Stronger GIS and mapping capabilities
- Clear, science-based metrics
- Improved statewide reporting
- More intentional communication and storytelling about conservation success

Many see this as essential for future funding and public trust.

## Internal organizational stability and workforce retention

Respondents described several internal challenges that affect program and service delivery:

- High turnover, particularly among Regional Managers
- Limited internal capacity
- Need for clearer priorities and communication
- Desire for more professional development opportunities

“Stability” is one of the most frequently mentioned internal needs.

## Emerging trends to monitor

Respondents identified several environmental, social, and political trends that will shape the future of voluntary conservation:

### Environmental trends

- Farmland loss
- Water scarcity and drought
- Increased wildfire risk
- Climate impacts on soil, water, forests, and species
- Rising project costs

### Social and political trends

- Anti-government sentiment
- Pressure to demonstrate measurable outcomes
- Funding uncertainty
- Aging farmer population
- Growing costs and barriers for new producers
- AI/data center development pressures on rural lands

## What people would miss most if SCC disappeared

Respondents overwhelmingly identified the following:

- SCC's funding for voluntary conservation
- Regional Managers and the coordination they provide
- A unified statewide system for conservation districts
- Representation in Olympia and advocacy for conservation district priorities
- Program guidance, technical support, and statewide cohesion

Small and resource-limited districts would be especially impacted.

# Strategic planning survey summary detail

Below is a synthesized set of themes that appeared repeatedly across conservation district managers, supervisors, SCC staff, state partners, and federal partners.

## The overarching theme: Fix and modernize SCC's grant and IT systems

Respondents consistently cite:

- Grant management systems are outdated, overly burdensome, slow, inconsistent, or restrictive.
- CPDS is "clunky" and outdated; PRISM or other modern tools are strongly desired.
- Districts want multi-biennium contracts, faster contracting, reduced administrative burden, and clearer guidance.
- Many conservation district managers said SCC has slipped from being "the best" at efficient pass-through funding and must reclaim that role.
- Many respondents view a functional, transparent, user-friendly grant management system as the most impactful change SCC could make.

## Trust, relationship repair, and rebuilding with conservation districts

A major theme across the responses:

- Many district managers feel the relationship with SCC has deteriorated and feels "top-down," "parent-child," or "managed rather than supported."
- SCC staff also report internal misalignment and desire stronger, clearer communication.
- Respondents call for:
  - Respect for local knowledge
  - Genuine collaboration
  - Meaningful, not performative, engagement
  - Responsiveness to feedback

- Transparency about decisions and constraints

## Stable, sustainable, flexible funding for conservation districts

Nearly all respondents emphasized the importance of funding, specifically:

- Permanent operational funding is repeatedly cited as critical.
- Many define “sufficient basic funding” as:
  - A minimally staffed functional conservation district (director, admin/finance, technical, education/outreach, monitoring).
- Districts worry about:
  - Unpredictable funding
  - Overreliance on short-term CCA funds
  - Administrative burdens eating into conservation delivery
- Many ask SCC to serve as the state-level advocate for sustained, equitable funding across all 45 conservation districts.

## Strengthening locally-led, voluntary conservation

Respondents deeply value Washington’s voluntary model and fear:

- Regulatory pressure will increase if voluntary outcomes aren’t demonstrated.
- SCC’s actions sometimes drift toward “priority-setting” rather than supporting district-defined priorities.

People want SCC to:

- Reinforce the philosophy that districts lead and SCC supports.
- Protect voluntary conservation as a statewide strategy.
- Demonstrate outcomes to justify the voluntary approach in a changing political climate.

## Better data and ways to demonstrate outcomes

Survey respondents indicated desire to have:

- Modern data systems to compile, map, analyze, and communicate impact.
- Scientifically sound metrics linking voluntary practices to measurable watershed or climate outcomes.
- A “storytelling and data” approach to build legislative and public confidence.

Many emphasize that SCC needs:

- A statewide reporting system
- Strong GIS capabilities
- Clear outcome-based metrics for BMPs
- Ability to aggregate district data into coherent statewide impact narratives

## Emerging trends respondents are tracking

Across responses, these trends surfaced consistently:

### Environmental and natural resources trends

- Farmland loss and agricultural viability concerns
- Water scarcity and drought
- Increased wildfire risk
- Climate change impacts on soil, forests, water, species
- Invasive species, habitat degradation, extreme weather

### Social and political trends

- Rising public distrust in government
- Anti-regulatory/anti-government sentiment
- Increasing pressure to show measurable results
- Need to engage younger generations
- Aging farmer population and cost barriers for new farmers
- AI-driven pressures on agricultural land (e.g., data centers)

### Operational trends

- Rising costs of conservation projects
- Staff retention challenges, especially among Regional Managers from the district perspective
- Funding instability at state and federal levels

# Organizational culture and the need for stable leadership

Several respondents point to the following trends as worth paying attention to:

- Understaffing
- Difficulty absorbing turnover
- Need for clearer decision-making pathways
- Staff wanting more involvement, transparency, and professional growth
- Desire for more internal cohesion and structure to reduce friction and burnout

## SCC's inspiring strength is conservation districts

Across all groups, the most consistently named strength is:

**“Trust and connection with local communities.”**

Conservation districts:

- Have long-standing relationships with landowners
- Understand local landscapes and needs
- Can achieve voluntary conservation where regulation cannot
- Provide a human, place-based connection that no centralized agency can replicate

District respondents overwhelmingly state this is SCC's most important asset and must be protected.

## Opportunities

### A. Fix SCC's systems before pursuing new initiatives

### B. Build science-backed, large-scale riparian restoration

- Statewide, science-based riparian buffer standards
- Large-scale riparian forest buffer implementation (especially for temperature reduction)
- Coordinated cross-agency buffer alignment

### C. Strengthen cross-boundary collaboration with key groups

- Tribes
- Federal and state agencies
- Urban communities

- Nonprofits and private landowners

## D. Expand outreach to small acreage and urban landowners

## E. Professional development, training, workforce development

# SCC's values

The following values appeared repeatedly:

- Trust
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Flexibility
- Consistency
- Collaboration
- Equity
- Respect for local knowledge
- Efficiency
- Stability
- Stewardship and science-based decision making
- Clarity in purpose and communication

# What people would miss if SCC disappeared

Across all respondent groups, the most cited losses are:

- Funding. (This is by far the top answer.)
- Regional Managers.
- Coordination across the 45 conservation districts.
- Advocacy and representation for conservation districts at the state level.
- Voluntary conservation infrastructure and statewide consistency.
- Trusted technical support and project expertise.
- Small districts would be devastated without SCC.

Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: April 27, 2026 1:59 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 147.55.130.160  
Unique ID: 1455271940  
Location: 47.2067, -122.4414

**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.** State agency partners

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?** Better functioning culture: more respectful communication and collaboration between districts and SCC staff; more inclusive meetings and networking sessions; enhanced mutual understanding of the strengths and limitations of the current governance structure; more effective collaboration.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?** Local district-land manager relationships

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?** Leveraging public resources to support private landowners to provide public benefit.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?** New kinds of grants directly to individual growers/land managers rather than districts where it makes sense.

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?** AI firm to rebuild/automate IT, policies, compliance, etc.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?** Lean efficient government. Having data to communicate/illustrate impact (and therefore justify more resources for more impact).

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)** Transparency, outcomes-oriented

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**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?** Encourage more (or less, in some cases) participation in SCC meetings so we don't always hear from the same three or four voices with a very particular perspective.

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**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?** An agency dedicated to private land management

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: April 27, 2026 3:57 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 216.163.104.165  
Unique ID: 1455322212  
Location: 46.9257, -117.683

**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.** Conservation district supervisors

**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?** Help WACD and the CDs get a permanent, reliable funding source.

**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?** Collaboration with CD's and their stakeholders.

**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?** Make sure the compass of future generations aligns with our core goals and values, and vice versa. If so, then whatever the Commission (thus the CD's) does will create enthusiastic generations of Washingtonians.

**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?** Industrial-Scale Native Plant Propagation: Expand the Riparian Plant Propagation Program (RPPP) into a state-led nursery partnership(INCLUDE/expand WACD's PMC) network that ensures a permanent, secure supply chain for native plants.

**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?** Increasing technology availability for producers/landowners.

**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?** AI and data center energy consumption regarding farmland preservation.

**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)** Flexibility, Relationships and Respect

**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?** Encouraging open dialogue and creating opportunities for collaborative "Do It Together" projects

**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?** Supporting the local 45 CDs in their efforts to promote voluntary incentive-based programs.

**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

Disruption of funding and loss of voluntary incentive-based programs.

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: April 27, 2026 7:57 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 98.203.128.195  
Unique ID: 1455395213  
Location: 46.9763, -123.7965

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.**

Conservation district managers

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

I would strongly encourage SCC to review and update all DOs to ensure alignment with current statutes. As the parent entity, SCC should provide clear, structured guidance to Conservation Districts on Code of Ethics, personnel matters, and related governance standards. Establishing a consistent, overarching framework would support districts in developing aligned policies and promote uniform practices across the state.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

In my opinion your most inspiring strength is your ability to bring consistency and credibility to conservation work across the state. SCC is uniquely positioned to connect local districts under a shared mission while still respecting the diversity of each community. Striking that balance between statewide leadership and local impact is powerful.

Building on that, your role as a trusted source of guidance, technical support, and governance standards should shine as a beacon. When SCC provides clear direction and support, it strengthens not just individual districts, but the integrity and effectiveness of the entire system.

In my opinion leaning further into that leadership, through consistent guidance, strong ethical frameworks, and coordinated support, will continue to elevate the work of Conservation Districts and the communities we serve.

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?**

We're not just conserving resources, we're building resilience. From restoring salmon habitat to supporting sustainable agriculture and protecting forests and soil, our work helps ensure that Washington's natural landscapes remain healthy, productive, and accessible for generations to come. It's about leaving things better than we found them, and making sure the next generation has the tools, knowledge, and opportunity to carry that forward.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?**

I think SCC has a real opportunity to get ahead of the AI revolution in a way that supports both innovation and agriculture, instead of forcing a tradeoff between the two. Which is a losing battle. As we know AI infrastructure and data centers are expanding, we're going to start seeing increased pressure on rural and agricultural lands. SCC could step into a leadership role by helping shape how and where that development happens so we're not losing prime farmland in the process. One approach would be to establish a "no net loss of farmland" mindset when it comes to large-scale development. That means prioritizing sites that are already industrial, degraded, or otherwise less suitable for agriculture, and putting some guardrails in place when conversion of AG land is proposed.

There's also a lot of potential in looking at models from places like Denmark and Japan that are finding ways to make these uses coexist. Instead of treating data centers as separate from the landscape, we could be thinking about how they integrate, using excess heat for greenhouse production, pairing infrastructure with solar and agriculture, or designing systems that reuse water in a way that supports surrounding land. SCC could also provide clearer guidance around siting, what areas should be avoided, what makes a site more appropriate, and how to align that with local planning. That kind of consistency would be really helpful for districts and counties trying to navigate these conversations. Another piece is incentives. If the state wants to encourage the right kind of development, there should be benefits tied to projects that avoid high-value AG land or incorporate conservation practices. At the same time, we should be supporting landowners so keeping land in production remains a viable choice. Conservation Districts could play an important role here as well. We're often closest to the landowners and understand the local landscape, so there's value in bringing districts into these discussions early, before decisions are already made. Overall, this feels like a opportunity for SCC to be proactive instead of reactive, to help guide growth in a way that keeps agriculture strong while still allowing for innovation.

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?**

I'd like to raise a concern about grant reimbursement / management process. It is extremely labor-intensive and places a significant administrative burden on districts. At the same time, there is no dedicated funding for leadership / administrative staff, which means we often have to piece together their pay from multiple sources. In reality, these roles are critical to the success of our programs. They are the backbone that supports our field staff and ensures compliance, reporting, and financial accuracy. I would strongly encourage SCC to evaluate this process and consider ways to streamline it, while also recognizing and funding the administrative capacity required to do this work effectively. Especially for Districts like mine that don't have rates and charges.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

One emerging trend we need to be mindful of is the growing role of AI in the world, and the bias that can come with both the technology itself and our perception of it. There's a tendency to either over trust or dismiss AI, and both can create challenges. In conservation, where decisions are tied to complex ecosystems and community relationships, it's important to recognize that AI is only as good as the data and assumptions behind it. If we're not careful, it can unintentionally reinforce gaps or overlook local knowledge. At the same time, there's a natural resistance to new technology, and we've seen this before. During the Industrial Revolution, innovations like automobiles, tractors, and locomotives were met with skepticism and concern. Over time, they became essential tools to farmers, but only after people figured out how to use them responsibly and integrate them into existing systems. AI feels like a similar moment. The opportunity is there, but so is the responsibility to approach it thoughtfully. That means staying aware of bias, maintaining human judgment, and making sure these tools support, rather than replace, the expertise of landowners, conservation staff, and local communities. If we stay grounded in that balance, we can adopt new tools in a way that strengthens our work instead of disrupting it.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

I believe SCC should stay grounded in a few core values moving forward: consistency and fairness in how guidance is applied across districts, strong accountability at both the state and local level, and transparency so expectations and decisions are clearly understood.

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**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

Maintaining a sense of trust and partnership with districts, creating an environment that feels collaborative and supportive rather than top-down. Any policies or processes put in place need to be practical and workable given real-world capacity, while still allowing for flexibility as conditions, technology, and funding continue to evolve.

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

Showing a clear respect for local knowledge, recognizing that districts understand their communities and landscapes best. At the end of the day, it all comes back to stewardship, taking care of our natural resources and public funds in a way that is responsible, sustainable, and built to last.

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**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

Oh geez, if SCC disappeared tomorrow, I think what people would miss most is the structure and support it provides across the state. SCC brings consistency, funding, and a sense of connection between districts that would be hard to replace. It helps ensure we're all moving in the same direction while still allowing districts to serve their local communities effectively. Beyond that, SCC plays a key role in keeping programs running, especially through funding, guidance, and coordination that districts rely on to do their work. Without it, there would be a real gap in stability and alignment, and districts would feel that pretty quickly. I also think people would miss the credibility SCC brings. It reinforces public trust and helps demonstrate that conservation work is organized, accountable, and part of something bigger than any one district!

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: April 27, 2026 8:13 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 184.157.241.195  
Unique ID: 1455398837  
Location: 47.4473, -122.4599

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.**

Conservation district manager

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

Leadership/Guidelines: The translation between SCC and Districts still falls short IMO. I know you are trying, but change feels slow. IT changes are a real stumbling block. Better IT option than CPDS needs to hurry up. I think there's been a lot of time spent with an organizational chart and those of us out here are not seeing the benefit. I realize this does take time, alternatively, Districts have been mostly patient and are not feeling the 'good news'. Down to 3 RMs with some of the best talent having left. It's a hard job you all have. It is not one filled with gratitude. Can the big parts that directly effect the districts be first on the agenda. That would really help.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

I don't know. Tenacity? I'd build upon delivery goals. Get policy, money, guidelines delivered.

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?**

The purpose is old. That is pretty unexciting and hard to remedy. It's work that has to be done. Future generations don't get that part and it just feels like old government. Probably involvement at a level future generations can participate in?? That brings us back to delivery...Can the Board or Commission institute an advisory council that is called something cool and is only for members under 30 or 40? Tap into their fresh ideas on need and policy?

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?**

Elections. Why? I think we already know the answer.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

More to do with less money.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

Silly example, but...Think of cowboys. Everyone loves the idea of cowboys right now. They are deemed, hard working, honest, practical, get 'er-done people. Unfortunately, our current political climate has about 2/3rds of the public feeling lied to every single day. That's not even a party-tainted comment. It's just what we've let evolve. If SCC could make taxpayers feel we totally respect THEIR environment, THEIR tax dollar, and the impact on something practical, it might nudge opinion to the positive side. Start with staff first.

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**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

Your staff is brilliant. But they are afraid to say much IMO. Perhaps they could lead more and inspire the changes. We do a thing we call 'Three Big Ideas'. It's mandatory that each employee submit 3 ideas that help us be better-faster-higher-kinder- modern and relatable. These are written down, reviewed in a safe environment staff meeting, evaluated for cost and feasibility, and prioritized. No one knows the cure better than your own workers

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

Dunno...Do town meetings and find out?? Thing is, at first you've got to get folks engaged enough to attend. I'd say free beer would do it, but probably not allowed. :) Maybe TRUST?

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**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

From my standpoint, expertise. Money for projects. Historic and solid policy. Representation in Legislature. Some outstanding people.

From the public standpoint, cost share, outreach for youth, seeing their favorite species protected,

So, harsh or not, those are my best answers. Thanks for asking.

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: April 28, 2026 4:57 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 73.254.12.230  
Unique ID: 1455704447  
Location: 48.4349, -122.2023

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.**

Conservation district managers

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

elections, HR services, database, more reliable legislative funding. hard for smaller districts to go to legislature

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

Voluntary, non-regulatory service to our communities

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?**

enhancing stewardship for Washington's agricultural heritage, waterscapes, and forestry resources with sustainable natural resource economy in mind.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?**

climate change adaptation

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?**

Develop a program to acquire farm and forestry land, hold it in trust, and provide access to farmers and foresters. It is becoming increasingly unaffordable for producers to purchase land, let alone afford all the other expenses to start a viable natural resource business.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

Tyranny of the minority: special interest groups, tribes, first amendment auditors, etc. flexing their muscles and making it harder for CDs to plan and implement great projects. Distraction and consumption of time and resources for special interest response.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

following RCW, building trust, genuineness, respecting efforts and institutional knowledge of CD and WSCC staff

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**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

Root all efforts in a culture of customer service; outreach from SCC leadership directly to CDs; timely responses to questions. Share stories from all CDs, not just the big ones or the same 5-10 CDs that ingratiate themselves with Commission leadership.

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

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Grow/increase natural resource producing lands and stewardship literacy

**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

Coordinated hub for state funding: WSCC grant funding process for CDs is easier and more streamlined than grant processes from other agencies, and funding is less competitive (usually no competition from Counties, non-profits, etc.).

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: April 28, 2026 7:09 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 162.10.9.33  
Unique ID: 1455746366  
Location: 37.3388, -121.8916

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.** SCC staff

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?** Repairing the relationship between the SCC commissioners / leadership / staff and the CD managers / supervisors so that it becomes what it once was - a respectful, cooperative environment of collaborative effort toward natural resource protection and enhancement through cooperation with landowners and the agricultural community.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?** Respect. SCC commissioners / leadership / staff have always respected the CDs, their supervisors / managers and the important role the CDs play in getting conservation on the ground. That respect has been lost by the SCC through lack of effective communication, support, and focus on the needs of the CDs, and the increasing pressures for the SCC to implement state-wide initiatives rather than focus on local community needs that the CDs have identified. We should renew our commitment to the CDs with more communication, support and focus on CD needs / initiatives at the local level, and restructure around those needs, rather than state-wide initiatives.

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?** Natural resource conservation, especially on working lands, is so important to the future of America and the world. Feeding Washington, the county and the world while improving conservation through best management practices is a win-win for all.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?** Getting back to our roots - emphasizing local conservation needs / efforts, rather than state / nation - not sure if that is being considered in the political world we find ourselves in now.

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<b>If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?</b>	From a practical perspective, putting more effort into local CD annual and five year planning so that they generate a list of projects based on identifiable local needs and fully funding those projects and monitoring them for effectiveness so that the SCC and CDs could truly and scientifically (not just anecdotally) demonstrate that the best management practices we use do conserve resources while maintaining agricultural viability for agricultural operators.
<b>What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?</b>	Increasing animosity / violence (be it verbal or otherwise) / intimidation from those who don't agree that the SCC has a role to play in promoting locally-led conservation on working lands.
<b>What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)</b>	Remembering who the SCC is, what we stand for, who we work with (CDs, partners) and who we serve (the public - not just landowners). Accountability, trust, cooperation, collaboration, respect are all part of that.
<b>How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?</b>	Modeling those values in the SCC (which I feel we do well) but also encouraging others to do so (and discouraging those who do not).
<b>What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?</b>	Insuring that locally-led decision-making doesn't disappear because the state knows best.
<b>If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?</b>	If the SCC disappeared tomorrow, 30 of the 45 CDs would soon be consolidated into 12-15 CDs across WA, and locally-led decision-making in the conservation of working lands would suffer and likewise soon disappear.

Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: April 29, 2026 1:24 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 162.10.9.34  
Unique ID: 1455993471  
Location: 37.3388, -121.8916

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.**

SCC staff

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

Have a fully functional data and reporting management tool that works across all programs and for all CDs (and any other partners that need access) to summarize all the conservation work being done by CDs in every WRIA-scale (and most HUC12) watershed in the state. This would make our communications with legislators and the executive branch more efficient and help CDs more succinctly tell their stories to local partners and elected officials about the importance and breadth of their work they accomplish each year.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

The passion of our people to complete the mission of our individual programs and the Commission as a whole, and the ingenuity and creativity required to do so.

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?**

To give every single landowner in the state the opportunity to have an active stake in protecting our natural resources for generations to come, while also supporting the economic viability of rural lands and the people who work them.

---

**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?**

Collaborate with DOT in their fish passage removal efforts and the needs of DOT and local jurisdictions to position CDs as the partner of choice for riparian and in-stream restoration work as primary suppliers of plant materials - and create the tools at SCC to help CDs fulfill those needs.

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?**

A rethinking of how CDs connect and relate to SCC - there is a growing sense that CDs are treating SCC just like a cash-cow and nothing more. There is a concerning decline in the comportment of many CD partners when working with SCC, and there are no tools in place to correct such behaviors. Getting the community to work more effectively to pull in one direction will help with larger goals like increasing funding (especially in budget-crunch periods) and expanding the cooperator pool.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

spiking cost of implementing ALL project types due to dramatic increases in labor, materials, equipment, and fuel costs. \$100K limit per landowner per fiscal year may not be adequate for the cost of large projects with significant impacts

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

accountability (continuous improvement)  
transparency  
honesty  
decency/respect for others  
resourcefulness

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**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

Reduce the amount of directly targeted shots taken at SCC staff and leadership from CDs, especially in public settings

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

Continuing to refine our processes in ways that maintain and improve our current status as a "funder-of-first-choice" due to the simplicity and efficiency with which we are able to support landowners with conservation projects.

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**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

Our partners would be most impacted by the loss of dedicated funding sources that are administered by people that have decades of knowledge about the technical and practical parts of the work that is being done across the state. The practicality and sensibility of the programs we administer and their direct impacts on the community are unmatched by any other state or local agency or organization.

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: April 29, 2026 6:47 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 162.10.9.32  
Unique ID: 1456123049  
Location: 37.3388, -121.8916

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.** SCC staff

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?** Be able to show the effectiveness of voluntary conservation including: improved IT capabilities, improved tracking of metrics, improved GIS capabilities, improved ability to quantify benefits of BMPs (using scientifically sound tools). This improvement will lead to increased investment in voluntary conservation as a strategy for achieving the state's natural resource goals.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?** Trust of private landowners

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?** Stewardship of land and water. Supporting the people managing working lands as important ways to maintain economic viability and steward natural resources. Fewer and fewer people in our society own land so broadening the focus to community benefits is important.

---

**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?** Going after pass through federal funding or other non-state funding in a coordinated fashion. Taking on a more forward roll in coordinating education and training of conservation staff. Update to Dairy Nutrient Management Planning statute so that it works better.

---

**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?** More than one: Supporting training and professional development of conservation district staff. CD technical staff turnover can be high - giving more opportunities for professional development and training would help. Also, working to provide meaningful metrics or otherwise make a case for Conservation Technical Assistance that would be compelling to the legislature. Speed along the transition to an electronic workflow at SCC.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?** Many of the types of work that our conservation community does fall in the realm of Natural Climate Solutions. I also think that there are opportunities to support ag producers in transitioning away from fossil fuels for some parts of their operations.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

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accountability, transparency

**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

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More ideas could be solicited from staff - our staff has a deep well of knowledge and experience to offer leadership.

**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

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Setting up our community for success and continued support from the legislature by better showing the impacts of our work via improved IT capabilities, improved tracking of metrics, improved GIS capabilities, improved ability to quantify benefits of BMPs (using scientifically sound tools).

**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

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Small CDs would struggle without the support of SCC.

Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 1, 2026 12:33 pm  
Browser: Safari 26.3 / OS X  
IP Address: 64.139.108.134  
Unique ID: 1456765284  
Location: 48.4122, -119.525

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.**

Conservation district supervisors

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

Find permanent dedicated funding

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

Being an independent agency, not subject to the party in power.  
Being small enabling us to be a tight knit, family atmosphere allowing for creative conversation and innovation

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?**

We always say if we don't do this what you will lose i.e. wildlife, biodiversity, healthy landscapes.  
Maybe we should emphasize more on all the benefits you gain in your life because we did these things.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?**

Intentionally left blank.

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?**

Conservation technical assistance funds. Because they're the most flexible it would provide districts with the money they need to meet the resource needs in their own diverse area.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

How younger generations communicate.  
Climate change and severe weather response  
Political divisiveness  
Regenerative ag

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

Flexibility and things or programs that bring us together

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**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

We are here to protect and enhance our states natural resources. We need to be mindful that no one individual, District, agency can do it alone. Conservation is OUR mission and future generations depend on our successes.

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

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Making sure austerity measures in federal and state budgets. Do not stop getting aid to producers.

**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

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Our political independence.

Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 1, 2026 1:01 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 162.10.9.29  
Unique ID: 1456775621  
Location: 37.3388, -121.8916

---

**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.**

SCC staff

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

Get on the same (positive) page with conservation districts, generally.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

Our care and commitment to conservation and the natural world. Our 'why'.

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?**

That we can all make a difference in helping to conserve natural resources--showing how efforts have changed the course of environmental health. Focusing on combatting doom and gloom/hopelessness in younger generations.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?**

More outreach to smaller homeowners in cities like Olympia and figuring out a smaller grant for those projects. Maybe they don't have farmland, but their backyard ends in a slope that is eroding down into a walking path/stream or harming native plants. We could do outreach at the farmers market or something, so people who are unaware of SCC/Conservation Districts learn that they can be involved with some grant programs. Some ideas: pollinator gardens, native plant gardens, rainwater gardens for runoff, preventing erosion, education about safe gardening practices, etc.

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?**

Grant funding for homeowners with smaller acreage. More outreach to reach those homeowners. Build hope in our communities overall, not \*just\* with those who are 'in-the-know' with conservation districts or have farmland.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

The political climate / concern about losing grant funding.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

Trust, creativity, flexibility.

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**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

(Sharing my personal desires here, hopefully that is okay!)

I would feel more inspired if there were more opportunities for growth for finance staff. I would love to feel more involved with our grant programs. In a couple years I will reach the top of my pay grade. If I want to stay at SCC, I would not be getting a raise each year, which is very concerning to me. Everything is getting more expensive, and I would love to be a homeowner one day.

I would feel more included if finance staff could be allowed to work remotely from any state (short-term/pre-approved). I have family all over the country and have to use vacation time when I go on family visits. This makes it so I can't go on as many true 'vacations' with my fiancé. My mom works at the Attorney General's office and is allowed to work remotely when she visits my sister from time to time. I wish I had that flexibility so I could see family more often while keeping this job long term. I love working here, but this is something I think about for what I want in the future.

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

More people learning about us and conservation districts.

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**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

How hard we try!

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 1, 2026 3:08 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 162.10.9.31  
Unique ID: 1456830831  
Location: 37.3388, -121.8916

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.** SCC staff

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?** Long-term basic, somewhat flexible, funding for conservation districts and our agency.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?** Our relationship and partnership with conservation districts. SCC and CDs need to work together on future goals in a positive way.

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?** The work of the State Conservation Commission and Conservation Districts conserves natural resources for everyone. We help keep water clean and pure, recommend BMPs that protect soil, water, forests and wildlife. The work of SCC and CDs helps protect soil, water, forests, and protect farmland from development. It also helps provide recreation areas for people to enjoy the outdoors.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?** We have a lot of programs and relationships to maintain at the present time.

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?** Completing our IT upgrade. The system has been antiquated for some time. CPDS has been around since 2009 and very clunky. However, it sounds like the direction towards RCO's PRISM has been the path to fix/upgrade our IT systems. An updated IT system should be able to easily pull reports, maps of project locations, Legislative Districts and funding sources.

---

**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?** Keeping SCC as a stand alone agency. We have finally been recognized as "the agency" to work with, people are aware of the Commission and our work. It has taken a long time to get to this point. Keeping our reputation as an agency that is depended on to complete the work in a professional way with accurate documentation, and on time. Our work with conservation districts is to provide a voluntary approach for landowners to improve and protect their land.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

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Accountability, Trust, Flexibility, Professional as well as Friendly. We are not a regulatory agency.

**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

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Providing information in a timely manner. Accept different perspectives and thoughts on projects for consideration. Looking at an issue from "their" perspective. Some people may be dealing with a lot of stress either work related or not. Friendly, professional and accepting come to mind.

**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

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Tracking projects from the beginning. Showing the "before" and the "final" project photos tells stories that people pay attention to. Saving lots of farmland, soil, forests, and improved water quality. Maps and photos tells a lot as well as personal relationships. Showing that SCC and CDs are the "go to" entities to work with.

**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

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Having a separate agency that works on voluntary conservation. There are several states where an agency like ours doesn't exist. It is within another agency similar to WSDA or some other type of entity. We have struggled over the years to not be a "department" in another agency.

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 4, 2026 12:02 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 166.113.39.122  
Unique ID: 1457463848  
Location: 47.4221, -120.3266

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.**

Conservation district managers

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

Solidify a stable, flexible, efficient and effective grant guidelines, procedures and management system for all SCC programs.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

In the past, SCC has worked very collaboratively with Districts to move collective impact forward. Securing funding at the legislature and developing policy that works for the entire Conservation District Community. This engagement and process has faded away over the last decade and needs to be reinvigorated and expanded upon. The relationship between CDs and SCC is not that of a parent/child. It is equal partners and should be viewed as such.

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?**

I dont know if there is a way to describe SCC's role in an exciting manner. SCC is the group that administers funds to Conservation Districts who do practical, impactful work. SCC is a supporting agency.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?**

Expanded funding requests through federal agencies, private foundations, and other granting opportunities to leverage state funding. Partnerships with similar agencies to pool administrative resources.

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?**

Build out a very strong grant management and finance system that includes reporting functions.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

With budgets being tighter we will need to show collective impact. SCC should be gathering information from Districts, combining it and telling the CD story to other agencies, the legislature, and the governors office.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

Flexibility of funding, and meaningful engagement of CDs. We are equal partners in this work and should be treated as such.

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**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

Engagement must be meaningful. All too often we are asked for our feedback and then it is ignored without acknowledgement or discussion.

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

Besides the obviously needed massive investments in conversation funding for CDs, reducing administrative burden on CDs so they can convert those funds into actual change. CDs are change makers in their local communities, but they get bogged down with administrative hurdles. Time spent dealing with unnecessary administrative requirements is wasted.

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**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

We would miss having a presence at the state government level that is focused on the CD perspective. SCC reminds other agencies, the governor, and the legislature that CDs exist and deserve support and consideration.

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 4, 2026 12:49 pm  
Browser: Chrome 148.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 216.235.103.19  
Unique ID: 1457485215  
Location: 47.2123, -123.0971

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.**

Conservation district managers

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

The most impactful achievement would be to modernize and fix SCC's grant management systems so they effectively support Conservation Districts.

This includes:

- Implementing multi-biennium funding contracts, which are standard across other agencies
- Reducing unnecessary administrative burdens, particularly those adopted internally rather than required by Washington State Office of Financial Management
- Creating systems that reflect trust in Districts as experienced, capable partners

Additionally, SCC should focus on organizational stability, including improving internal culture and retaining experienced staff who understand District operations.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

SCC's greatest strength lies in its connection to Conservation Districts.

Districts are delivering meaningful, on-the-ground conservation outcomes across Washington. SCC's role is most effective when it supports and enables this work, rather than constraining it.

Building on this strength means:

- Trusting District expertise
- Streamlining processes
- Acting as a responsive partner rather than an oversight bottleneck

---

**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?**

SCC's purpose is best expressed through the real-world impact of Conservation Districts.

Future generations will be inspired by:

- Salmon recovery
- Floodplain restoration
- Sustainable agriculture
- Community-based conservation

SCC's role is to enable these outcomes, not to be the focal point. The excitement comes from the work on the ground, not the administration behind it.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?**

Before pursuing new opportunities, SCC should address existing, well-known system challenges.

There is significant opportunity in:

- Fixing current inefficiencies
- Improving responsiveness to District feedback
- Aligning systems with proven models used by other agencies

Addressing these "low-hanging fruit" issues would unlock far more impact than pursuing new initiatives on top of broken systems.

---

**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?**

Invest in building a modern, efficient, and user-informed grant management system.

Such a system should:

- Be designed with direct District input
- Reduce administrative friction
- Improve speed, clarity, and flexibility in funding delivery

This would have an immediate and lasting impact on conservation outcomes statewide.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

There is growing public concern around government efficiency and accountability.

Systems that create unnecessary complexity, delays, or costs risk:

- Undermining public trust
- Reducing the effectiveness of public investments

SCC has an opportunity to lead by demonstrating efficient, outcome-focused administration that maximizes the value of public funding.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

Decisions should be grounded in:

- Trust in Conservation Districts
- Efficiency in program delivery
- Flexibility to adapt to real-world conditions
- Responsiveness to partner feedback

A practical guiding question could be:

"How does this decision improve Conservation Districts' ability to deliver conservation outcomes?"

---

**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

SCC can build a stronger, more inclusive community by demonstrating that District feedback leads to action.

Currently, feedback processes often feel procedural rather than meaningful. To improve this:

- Clearly communicate how feedback is used
  - Show visible changes based on input
  - Engage in more two-way dialogue, not just information collection
-

**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

The most meaningful impact would be to remove barriers and empower Conservation Districts.

SCC's role is not to perform the work directly, but to:

- Provide efficient funding systems
  - Reduce unnecessary constraints
  - Enable Districts to operate at full capacity
- 

**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

Primarily, the grant funding pathway that connects legislative investments to Conservation Districts.

This highlights SCC's critical responsibility: ensuring that these funds are delivered efficiently, effectively, and with minimal friction.

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 4, 2026 1:09 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 63.142.196.220  
Unique ID: 1457494537  
Location: 48.4122, -119.525

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.**

Conservation district managers

---

**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

More clearly understand the relationship with conservation districts and how best to serve the needs of Washington State taxpayers and natural resources through effective programming. The Conservation Commission is supportive in every way possible of developing, supporting, and assisting local conservation districts who are the premier delivery arm of voluntary conservation in Washington State. The Commission's role in that is pivotal as a key connector to state agencies, legislature, governor's office, and statewide advocacy groups, ensuring that they are informed of the role of conservation districts in delivering high quality conservation technical assistance, cost-share, and education programming at the local level.

---

**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

The ability to deliver funding to conservation districts as a quick and efficient pass through of state funding intended to be delivered to on-the-ground conservation. The Conservation Commission used to be the absolute best at this. You have frankly slipped in the past 5 years and other agencies are catching up on how to deliver funding quicker, more efficiently, and with less overhead burden. The Commission can, and should be, the best at this.

---

**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?**

The Conservation Commission is a small state agency tasked with supporting and funding the power of 45 local conservation districts that deliver site-specific, voluntary, natural resource conservation to farmers, local residents, tribes, community organizations, other local governments, and others to conserve Washington State's natural resources for future generations.

---

**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?**

Regular close collaboration with the conservation districts you support and fund to identify ways to improve operations for both sides of the relationship. Communicate clearly and accurately about the restrictions you have so conservation districts may assist with finding solutions and possibly ways to remove those restrictions.

---

**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?**

Improve your grant management system. Grants should be rolled out quicker. Funding awards known well before the beginning of fiscal years. There should be funding formulas agreed to long before the legislature finishes their session so we are all aware of the likely (not guaranteed until the final budget is passed and signed by the governor) funding amounts we will see. That's critical even for us to continue to work with legislators to inform them how their decisions on the Commission's budget will affect their local conservation districts and it significantly increases much needed stability for conservation districts.

---

**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

The world is getting hotter and drier. We're burning more lands and lacking necessary irrigation water throughout much of Washington State. These two issues should be at the forefront of funding and policy work. Conservation Districts are a key avenue for local residents to address these issues in a real world way. We need to be working collaboratively (SCC and CDs) to raise these issues and showing how we can help Washington meet this challenge proactively.

---

**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

Honest collaboration with conservation districts. Open communication to CDs about what you need so we can help you and what you can and are doing to help us. Humility to know that others can help you if you let them. Actively working to build trust with districts via transparent discussions, actively listening to understand, and clear communications on needs from CDs and operational processes.

---

**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

I'm not sure what you mean by SCC's community. Is that internal (board to staff), is that SCC and CDs, is it more holistic than that? There are so many levels of community that this is very difficult to answer succinctly. What we all collectively do is inspiring and if people within our 'community' don't recognize that, I'm not sure I can come up with a ad slogan to help them get there. Here's the issue as I see it in our community. Most of our CD folks are so incredibly inspired and motivated at the local level that our passion comes through as anger or bitterness when we become frustrated. I believe SCC staff truly wish to do their jobs well and deliver high quality products, maybe to a fault at times as perfection is sought over opportunities to be quick and 80+% effective.

I believe to improve the inspiration and inclusivity we need more CD staff to understand SCC work flows and pressures and vice versa. We need CD people to spend a day in the life of an SCC employee and I feel the opposite would be highly beneficial. We need to understand where each other is coming from to being to find ways to be more inclusive and to help inspire each other and those who are just getting to know us.

---

**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

The funding you pass through to conservation districts IS having the most meaningful impact on voluntary conservation in Washington already. That's the ticket. You're already there. You can improve it by increasing efficiency of how those funds are managed and disbursed. You can get more funding to disburse. You can tell others (legislature, governor, state agencies, media, etc.) all the great things we do with those funds. The trick is, you are already there, but there's always room for improvement.

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**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

I would miss the people I have gotten to know and care deeply about. That would be the biggest loss in the short term. The long-term loss of an independent state conservation agency that advocates for funding for local conservation districts would have massive impacts on voluntary conservation delivery in our state and I fear it would lead to greater mistrust of government as only regulatory agencies that occasionally masquerade as non-regulatory technical agencies would remain with any real funding.

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 4, 2026 3:14 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 162.10.9.31  
Unique ID: 1457552852  
Location: 37.3388, -121.8916

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.** SCC staff

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

(Selfishly...) Establish a combined ongoing budget of \$20M for CDs to do forest health and community wildfire resilience work.  
  
Have a relationship with the Conservation Districts where they trust us, they feel trusted, and everyone in both worlds understands the value and importance of each other's work and processes.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

Adaptability and readiness to respond to need

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?**

Who doesn't want to live in a state that prioritizes a thriving human and natural resource environment helping to ensure healthy living, a healthy environment and healthy natural resource economies that benefit everyone?

"We have Conservation Districts' backs so they can have your back."

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?**

I would infuse the science hub with all the funding and capacity they need to help us with:  
-data collection/management/analysis,  
-developing useful reporting metrics and analysis of work  
- GIS mapping tied to reporting and communication  
- furthering best science strategies and connect program managers to the best science through partnerships with universities and other research entities  
- look at greenhouse gas emission reduction measurements/tools tied to forest health projects and CCA reporting

I'd like to see a GIS tech hired as part of that.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

How people access and retain information; what moves people to action.

The ability to use GIS and web mapping to track and communicate metrics and exchange data between agencies.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

Flexibility. Trust. Adaptability.

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**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

Hire good people who can handle difficult conversations, are good listeners, are flexible and can communicate well.

Be transparent.

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

To continue it, ensure it remains flexible and accessible, and that that we're supporting innovation and not getting stuck in old ways of doing things.

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**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

The money. The trust built between certain staff and CDs.

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 4, 2026 4:48 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 75.142.64.30  
Unique ID: 1457594282  
Location: 46.2109, -119.168

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.** WACD

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?** The SCC has the tools and technology to fully meet the needs of the 45 conservation districts.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?** A genuine desire to grow and improve.

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?** Conservation touches every Washingtonian. What the SCC does with and for conservation districts is vitally important to Washington State.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?** Actively partner with conservation districts on securing sustainable funding.

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?** Provide a central resource for CDs to host their websites, email, and phone systems with professional technical management.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?** Impacts of climate change on the long-term success of conservation projects.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)** Finding balance between caring for our people and making the best data-based decisions possible.

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**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?** Build trust and confidence with the people you serve.

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?** Continue to support voluntary, locally led conservation at the state level, with graphic, persuasive examples from across the state.

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**If SCC disappeared tomorrow,  
what would people miss most  
about us?**

Support at the state level for local conservation.

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 5, 2026 5:02 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 162.142.103.162  
Unique ID: 1458001765  
Location: 47.6657, -117.2251

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.**

Conservation district managers

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

Flexible, sustainable funding for CDs. Funding must be flexible to be able to meet the different needs of CDs, resources, and landowners across the state. Funding set up to support locally-led conservation.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

The ability to coordinate between 45 CDs across the state. We are familiar with many different state models and we recognize that Washington is unique and we benefit because of that. The Commission being an independent agency is a strength with a more direct connection between the on-the-ground work and the legislature. We value the regional approach through the work of Regional managers as a liaison.

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?**

Being locally-led allows the opportunity for future generations to be involved at the local level and recognize the value of our natural resources. This helps to create better prioritization and policy decisions in the state (including other state budget priorities). The more we can inspire the community through our work, the more of a positive effect there will be on other priorities and challenges that face the state.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?**

We would love to see the Commission be open to on the ground innovation coming from the local level that would be supported by flexible funding that can adapt to the needs of the landscape. An example would be regenerative agriculture and allowing CDs to explore what practices and activities are needed in their local community and funding would be adaptable to meet that need. In this example, emerging practices could be ahead of the NRCS FOTG but funding for this work is important locally.

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?**

Strengthening the locally-led CD delivery system. Strengthening resources for local boards, and the CDs that they lead in the areas of CD operations, elections, and governance. Provide policy leadership in the voluntary conservation space so that voluntary conservation is elevated in engagements with other agencies and partners that may have a regulatory role.

Highlight the local CD work as the standard for conservation in Washington.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

An extremely difficult agricultural economy, water quantity issues, use of AI and the energy consumption that comes along with it and effects on our water resources, Overall energy demands will affect our natural resources.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

Focus on locally-led conservation and providing a framework to support that. Accountability and trust at both the SCC and CD levels. CDs are dependent on the flexible use of SCC funding to meet local needs.

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**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

Trust CDs to do their job. CDs have the expertise at the local level to make decisions that meet the needs of the community. CDs are by and large accountable and proficient in their daily operations and work. Rules and guidelines should be developed and maintained to recognize this fact. We are hopeful that the work of the Ombuds group is setting the framework for this. Try to get Commission meetings/tours to as many areas as possible around the state so that more districts can show their work. We also value collaboration between SCC and WACD as both are very important to us being 45 strong.

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

Keeping it voluntary, allowing landowners to steward their resources, continuing to provide technical and financial assistance where it makes sense. Demonstrating to policy makers and public what WA would look like without CDs.

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**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

Under law the conservation framework would not be viable if there was no Commission. Collaboration between CDs would suffer. Direct funding from the Commission is critical to CDs, The effects on small districts would be devastating. The direct support from RMs.

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 5, 2026 7:04 pm  
Browser: Firefox 150.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 162.10.9.29  
Unique ID: 1458040706  
Location: 37.3388, -121.8916

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.** SCC staff

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

Shift public perception of conservation from a private landowner transactional voluntary exercise to a community exercise. Another way to state that might be to normalize Aldo Leopold's land ethic values. Conservation as part of a community and ecosystem. Conservation would have societal value so everyone would want to do it without needing an incentive.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

First thought is passion for what we do, but passion only takes us so far, and raises the question of passion for what? Natural resources? Landowners? Often tension in what we do.

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?**

We work with private landowners to restore natural resource conditions in a way that benefits everyone including the landowner.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?**

As long as I've been here, there's been an us/them relationship between SCC and CDs and between SCC and tribes. Each thinks they know how best to implement natural resource recovery. A common goal of land ethic resonates with tribes. When I explain it, the biologists at least say "that's what we're trying to do!" SCC is in the middle and therefore in a unique position to unite tribes, CDs and SCC rather than be constantly at odds.

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?**

Outreach. Change hearts and minds so natural resources conservation is a priority for all. That then puts pressure on elected funders to fund what people want.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

When I was in college, global warming wasn't a topic. Greenhouse gas effect was, but not in the climate change context. Putting my ecologist hat on, when climate changes habitats, species that like the new conditions move in; species that don't like it move out or perish. Do we continue to try to maintain the status quo (especially for Columbia River salmon) or do we realistically adapt our strategy to avoid tilting windmills.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

yes

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**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

Not a direct answer, but I've always felt that SCC will have value (and perhaps not get sucked into another agency as was attempted previously) is that we need to be the hub of knowledge of all things voluntary conservation: technical, social, economic and the go-to respected place for others to come to.

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

Move voluntary conservation participation from 5% to 95%

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**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

Our funding and cross-boundary, cross agency coordination

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 6, 2026 12:16 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 162.10.9.31  
Unique ID: 1458291903  
Location: 37.3388, -121.8916

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.**

SCC staff

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

Build an efficient grant delivery and reporting system for administering funds and communicating the impact of voluntary conservation across the state. This coordinated effort would combine data, economics, and stories from landowners and communities. This would provide a transparent process for districts, as well as build trust with legislators and taxpayers to justify investment, and reinforce the value of the conservation district model. Hopefully the PRISM model will help pave the way. Need to invest in different ways of telling the story through effective mapping and GIS programs as well. It would be helpful to have dedicated staff person to do GIS projects.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

Our connection to local communities through districts. District staff build trust with landowners and producers in a way no state agency can replicate. That trust is the foundation of voluntary conservation, and SCC is in a unique position to support and elevate that work at the state level.

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?**

We help people take care of the land and water in ways that work for their lives and livelihoods. By supporting local solutions and relationships through districts, we make conservation something people choose, not something done to them.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?**

Invest more intentionally in storytelling and communications as a core function. We need to better connect the dots between funding, on-the-ground practices, and outcomes for communities. In this approach, there is also an opportunity to clearly define roles between SCC, districts, and WACD so we have a stronger alignment.

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?** Identify and provide sustainable, long-term funding for districts. We could start this effort by building a statewide narrative that shows the on-the-ground impact of voluntary conservation. We have incredible work happening through districts every day, but we don't consistently tell that story in a way that resonates with legislators, partners, and the public. If we can connect local success to statewide outcomes, and back it up with accurate data and real stories, we would be able to build long-term support for this work.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

1. Increasing pressure toward regulatory approaches, even as voluntary conservation continues to show results.
2. The growing need to demonstrate outcomes, and public expectations around transparency and accountability with funding.
3. Unsustainable state funding avenues. SCC and districts have benefited greatly from CCA funding, becoming a core of some district services. In many ways, it fell into our lap so we have an opportunity to get ahead of the narrative and demonstrate the benefit it has had in Washington communities to legislature and their priorities.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)** Trust, accountability, and clarity. Trust with districts, legislators, and the public that we will represent the work accurately. Accountability for how public funds are used and the outcomes they produce. And clarity in our roles and decisions so we can move forward confidently.

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**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?** By creating more constructive ways for feedback to be shared and heard. There's a lot of passion in this work, but not always the right avenues to express it productively. Setting expectations for professionalism and mutual respect, while still making space for honest input, would go a long way. We should also be more confident in our role and values, rather than reacting to individual personalities or pressures.

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?** Adding resiliency to the system that supports local conservation. Ensure districts have the funding, guidance, and support they need to do their work well. When local relationships are strong, conservation outcomes follow.

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**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?** Districts would feel the loss of funding, coordination, and guidance from our Regional Managers. At a broader level, the state would lose a consistent advocate for voluntary conservation. The public might not immediately recognize SCC's role, but they would feel the impact through fewer projects, less support for landowners, and reduced local conservation capacity over time.

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 6, 2026 12:18 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 24.20.14.164  
Unique ID: 1458292692  
Location: 45.6652, -122.5215

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.**

Conservation district managers

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

Build a grant-making and management process that works. One that is efficient, consistent, and treats conservation districts as trusted partners rather than risks. This isn't glamorous, but it is foundational, and every other goal depends on it.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

At our core, we are a network of people who care deeply about the land and the communities that depend on it. That shared mission, voluntary conservation supported by trust and human connection, is what keeps people engaged and committed. The relationships between Regional Managers, district staff, commissioners, board supervisors, and commission staff represent years of built trust, even through periods of change. That's the foundation worth protecting, and the one everything else should be built around.

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?**

SCC exists to support the people doing conservation work on the ground, backing them up with resources, flexibility, and trust. At its best, SCC enables conservation districts to secure the flexible funding they need to say yes to projects.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?**

Publish a detailed, plain-language annual or biennial budget and share it with the Commissioners and CDs. Increasing financial transparency would be a meaningful culture shift, both internally and in how CDs experience the relationship. It signals accountability and builds the kind of trust that no strategic plan language can manufacture.

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?**

A fully redesigned, well-resourced grant management process, with staff empowered to make decisions, clear guidance, and systems built for the realities of CD work. I don't believe there's a single magical software solution that can do all of this; I think it will likely need to be a mix of several solutions. However, I don't think that's a bad thing. We've seen how proprietary software can impede progress (CPDS); diversifying isn't a bad thing. As the current process has been clamped down tighter and tighter, it's creating friction at multiple steps. Fixing it wouldn't just save time; it would fundamentally change the working relationship between SCC and CDs for the better.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

Staff retention, particularly on the Regional Manager team. Losing three RMs, 50% of the team, in eight months is not normal turnover; it's a signal. RMs are the most direct interface between SCC and conservation districts, and losing long-tenured, experienced people at that rate suggests something is wrong at a deeper level than any reorganization can easily fix. If the current change strategy is producing this much attrition among key staff, it may be worth pausing to ask whether the strategy itself needs adjustment, not just the structure.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

Getting to Yes - SCC was not created to be a compliance agency. It was created to support conservation districts. The relationship used to feel like partners working toward a shared goal. Increasingly, it feels like a parent-child dynamic, with CDs feeling handled or managed rather than supported. Getting back to "how do we make this work" as the default position would matter enormously.

Collaboration - Ensuring that collaboration and feedback requests are genuine rather than a box-checking exercise. True collaboration requires a commitment to incorporate feedback or transparently explain why a request isn't possible. The difference between feeling heard and feeling handled is whether anything changes as a result.

Forward-thinking - Decisions should be made with an eye toward how they'll apply in the future, not just to the immediate situation.

Flexibility - Because of the wide range of work we all do, flexibility is crucial. Empower staff to make decisions that benefit the resources.

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**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

Honestly, inspiration isn't the gap; CDs are doing inspiring work every day, in partnership with SCC. What's needed is for SCC staff to feel more supported, included, and trusted in their own organization. The inclusivity question might be better directed inward: are SCC employees, especially RMs and project-facing staff, meaningfully included in decisions that affect their work and their relationships with districts?

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

Give CDs more flexibility in how they use public funding. Prioritizing multi-biennium contracts would be a good start.

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**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

The funding, of course, and the Regional Managers. They are critical to the success of both the Commission and CDs.

Additional Comments:

1.

This survey is oriented toward vision, inspiration, and bold thinking, which makes sense for a strategic planning process. But it's worth naming directly: most of what conservation districts want from SCC isn't bold or inspiring, it's functional. We want consistency, transparency, responsiveness, collaboration, and accountability. We want SCC to do what it already does, but do it better and with more trust extended in our direction. A strategic plan that centers those values, rather than aspirational language that doesn't match the current experience, would be far more credible, welcome, and attainable.

2.

SCC is not a granting agency in the way Ecology, RCO, or most other grant-making agencies are. For those agencies, grants exist to advance the priorities of the granting agency. That's not what SCC was designed to do. Statutorily, SCC's grant programs exist to distribute funding in support of District programs, not to direct them. Legislative requirements do impose some priorities, and that's appropriate, but the underlying philosophy is that SCC funds District work, not the other way around.

In recent years, that distinction has blurred. It increasingly feels as though SCC is trending toward defining and advancing its own priorities rather than supporting those held by the majority of Districts. That's a meaningful departure from the agency's purpose.

This isn't an argument for zero accountability or a blank check. It's an argument for internal consistency: if SCC funding is philosophically distinct from other public dollars-designed specifically to support the areas where the State Legislature and District priorities intersect-then it should be easier to spend, not harder. By design, there should be more flexibility and fewer restrictions on SCC funding than on any other public funding Districts receive. Right now, the experience is often the opposite, and that gap between what SCC is supposed to be and what it increasingly feels like is at the heart of many of the frustrations reflected in these answers.

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.**

SCC staff

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

Secure stable funding for all 45 conservation districts to meet their essential operational needs, while simultaneously advancing bold, forward-looking innovation across the voluntary conservation system.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

Our greatest strength is a powerful legacy of voluntary conservation that has been perpetuated by passionate professionals, dedicated community leaders, and landowners with a deep love and stewardship for protecting natural resources.

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?**

We can inspire future generations by showing-not just telling-what voluntary conservation can achieve across entire landscapes through expanded outreach, education, and demonstration, and sustained by the funding needed to make that work possible.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?**

1. Even greater support for farmland preservation and working toward filling gaps that exist in some parts of the state.
2. Provide the resources for districts to engage in more demonstration sites where landowners, students, and communities can see real-world solutions in action for projects such as regenerative agriculture, wildfire resilience, drought adaptation, and livestock practices.
3. Create a pathway for rapid adoption of new and innovative BMPs into existing programs.
4. Create opportunities for pilot projects where farmers, ranchers, and forest owners test programs that allow for greater flexibility in implementing BMPs.
5. Work toward more coordinated programs across watersheds, forests, and agricultural lands - similar to an RCPP approach - to bring more partners together and achieve more impactful outcomes.

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?**

Invest in permanent, fully funded staff for every conservation district, because with strong, stable teams in place, districts gain the capacity to innovate, compete for diverse funding, and dramatically expand their programs and impact on the ground.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

Key trends to monitor include the continued loss of farmland; impacts of a changing climate on agriculture, forestry, and riparian systems; increasing public scrutiny of government agencies; uncertainty in state funding; and growing barriers to engaging the next generation in farming and ranching.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

Every decision should center on benefiting conservation districts and the land, resources, and communities they serve-building trust above all through transparency, prioritizing district needs, and streamlining processes to maximize efficiency and expand on-the-ground conservation.

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**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

SCC should continue working to improve efficiency by streamlining and standardizing program guidelines where possible. It's important to remain mindful of district workloads by limiting unnecessary surveys and requests for information. When feedback is collected, we should clearly communicate when and how it is used to ensure participants see the value of their time and input.

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

The most meaningful impact we can have on voluntary conservation in Washington is to provide unwavering support for conservation districts to do their work through strong advocacy, efficient and responsive operations, and a commitment to innovation.

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**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

Aside from annual funding, people would most miss SCC's role in fostering a strong community of partners, as well as the guidance and support the Commission provides to districts in navigating risk, managing transition, and maintaining accountability.

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 6, 2026 1:05 pm  
Browser: Chrome 148.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 162.10.9.31  
Unique ID: 1458314248  
Location: 37.3388, -121.8916

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.** SCC staff

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?** Secure and robust operational funding for conservation districts that fund local priorities.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?** Our uniqueness as a state agency. Owning our statutory duty to assist conservation districts and keeping them fully operational to implement voluntary conservation across the entire state.

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?** The Washington State Conservation Commission is the state agency established in statute specifically to assist and strengthen Washington's conservation districts. SCC provides conservation districts with the support they need to implement voluntary conservation that protects our land, water, and air. Conservation districts can work with land managers who may not be well served by regulatory or other agency programs. With direct support from SCC, conservation districts are able to leverage funding and build programs that address the natural resource concerns of their communities at the ground level.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?** Well recognized incentive-based training programs for good governance and board development at conservation districts, along with road show-style trainings for supervisors and staff. Ideally, these would be coordinated with CTD and WACD.

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?** Upgrading "the systems"-our database and financial management systems-to meet the needs of SCC and conservation districts. This would be my top priority.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

- Growing importance of collaborations
- Incorporation of innovative practices beyond standard NRCS practices
- Rising costs of natural resource projects
- Need for funding across all stages-from design to implementation to long term maintenance

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

Trust, equity, clarity

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**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

Incorporate conservation districts' long range and annual plans when assessing and communicating the statewide need for local conservation.

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

Meeting the local needs of every conservation district - including the needs that aren't always reflected in the daily headlines. Addressing these on the ground priorities, as well as the high visibility issues, would meaningfully advance voluntary conservation statewide.

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**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

Having a coordinated state-level entity that provides streamlined, accessible funding to conservation districts. Even with recent challenges in program development and older technology, SCC's administration remains more efficient than many partner agencies. Programs like CTA and NRI ensure an equitable, statewide distribution of resources, rather than leaving districts to rely solely on individual legislative requests - a model that can create "haves and have-nots" and significantly undermine conservation services in some parts of the state.

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 6, 2026 5:04 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 162.10.9.32  
Unique ID: 1458414794  
Location: 37.3388, -121.8916

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.** SCC staff

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?** Stability. It sounds simple, but it has complexity and is not easily achieved. If we could build out our org structure in a way that is resilient to changes over time and allows for adequately staffing our programs so that our implementation and development is not hindered by absences or departures, we will deliver a better product and allow staff to do their best work.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?** Collaboration. SCC is unique in its governance structure and ability to facilitate work that is beneficial to urban and rural communities across the state.

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?** Finding common ground across Washington with incentive-based conservation and forward-thinking program development.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?** This has certainly been considered but it is relatively bold, asking for what we really want. We do incredible work with a skeleton crew, but we would be able to do the work that our partners and our state deserve if we were a well-resourced team with capacity to absorb staffing changes and rise to opportunities.

---

**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?** Go to scale on all our programs and projects. OFP is better with two people than one, and same goes for VSP and RGP, but they would be much better off with three or four folks, but unlimited - well let's get a succession planner in every district office, a VSP specialist in every VSP county, fund the OFP account with at least \$200 million

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?** When there are broad downturns in the economy, conservation has historically risen to the occasion by building new bridges with unexpected partners to keep the work moving forward. As we waver on the edge of what could become a precipice, we should be looking to build diverse coalitions of support and partnership to reach our goals within a fiscally strained climate.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

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Stability.

**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

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Use our opportunities to build rapport and comradery amongst our team. I think we missed an opportunity with our last mandatory, in-person training to talk more about the shared challenges we face and develop a shared understanding of how we will overcome them. If nothing else, we could have had lunch together.

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

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Do well in all of our program and project implementation so that we build more bridges to communities across the state.

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**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

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Due to our role statewide for incentive-based conservation, our absence would leave a void in the landscape for providing services to landowners and funding to conservation districts. Take that down the line, and if there were a WA dust bowl, we would be missed for every aspect of our work.

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 6, 2026 5:29 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 216.110.217.10  
Unique ID: 1458423756  
Location: 46.2542, -119.9165

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.**

Conservation district managers

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

Fully establish a robust support system, including long-term sustainable funding, for all CDs in Washington.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

SCC is a unique entity that unites 45 grassroots CDs. This is a valuable network of hard-working people doing amazing things for our state!

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?**

Bringing together and strengthening valuable on-the-ground conservation for working lands and natural resources.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?**

Helping each CD establish our own facility/office/land and therefore our long-term security.

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?**

Provide a rock-solid base of funding for CDs that need it, as well as robust legal, HR and policy support for CDs that need it.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

Policies, regulations, and administrative burdens are increasing for CDs, and we need support to either relieve those burdens or pay the costs associated with them. We need more funding and support for administration!

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

Trust, transparency, loyalty to mission and support for CDs (serving CDs, not other agencies)

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**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

Keep walking the talk of wanting to listen, be responsive, build trust, be transparent, show true support for CDs where we need it, look for innovative solutions while striving for consistency.

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

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Empower CDs to do their best work locally. Work with us like a consultant to address our needs, bring in funding, support our outreach, bring in new partners, and build a lasting system that keeps our CDs thriving into the future.

**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

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the support you bring to CDs (from regional managers to \$\$ to legislative outreach, etc.) - thanks for all you are doing!

Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 7, 2026 1:35 am  
Browser: Mobile Safari 26.4 / iOS  
IP Address: 75.253.118.100  
Unique ID: 1458525349  
Location: 47.6137, -122.3104

---

**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.**

Conservation district managers

---

**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

Enough operational funding for each CD to cover the basics for an efficient, transparent, and responsive local government (1.0 FTE Director, 1.0 FTE Finance & Admin, 1.0 FTE Resources Conservation, 1.0 FTE Research & Monitoring, 1.0 FTE Education & Outreach, rent, communications, insurance, office/field supplies, equipment, IT, fleet, audits, training, professional services, dues, etc.).

---

**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

Partnerships, relationships, innovation, and flexibility.

---

**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?**

To support local CDs so they can listen to local community conservation needs and efficiently provide communities the conservation programs and services they prioritize. "SCC supports CDs so that local CDs can bring conservation to the people"

---

**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?**

Long-term, sustainable, predictable, funding for CDs.

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?**

A Washington State-supported Regional Conservation PRIORITIES Program (an alternate use of the RCPP acronym) that does not require federal matching funds. Such a program would enable conservation districts to collaborate across political boundaries with tribal governments, nonprofits, and federal, state, and local partners to address shared regional conservation priorities.

---

**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

Funding is very unstable for CDs, especially with the current unpredictability of federal funding. The lack of federal funding is driving more competition for state and private funding, resulting in scarcity of resources available for TA and FA. CD staff will need to spend much more time writing grants to bring limited conservation funds to our local communities. This increase in time spent looking for funding results in decreased time putting conservation on the ground.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

Trust, respect, efficiency, innovation, flexibility

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**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

Continue to listen to CDs. Ask for input from CDs early and often. Value and rely on CD knowledge, experience, and expertise to inform WSCC policies and practices. Continue to create and use workgroups (like the Ombuds Workgroup) that include SCC and CD staff working side by side.

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

Provide CDs with adequate resources so we can be responsive to our communities and the highest priority conservation needs.

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**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

SCC brings CDs together from across the state to work as partners in a network of 45 CDs that cover the state. SCC helps CDs gather, connect, and support each other.

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 7, 2026 9:38 am  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 98.97.34.97  
Unique ID: 1458642252  
Location: 47.6109, -122.3303

---

**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.**

Conservation district managers

---

**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

Start to work as an actual operating entity. The RCW has clear requirements for the commission. It needs to follow the requirements. It currently operates as a rubber stamp for SCC staff with very little accountability or transparency. The members of the commission need to support conservation districts instead of using it as a venue to promote other agency priorities.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

As a small CD, I cannot say that the commission an inspiring strength. There is no connection to the issues we face. It is difficult to engage in a meaningful way.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

Agricultural viability and the way SCC and commission members are driving the impacts.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

Integrity, accountability, transparency, common sense. All those are currently lacking and it is difficult to see that changing.

---

**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

Replace the SCC leadership with leadership that can actually be inspiring and inclusive. The current leadership has created a work environment that has driven away key people while creating divisions within conservation districts. This has all happened with members of the commission standing idly by, which undermines their credibility.

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

Support conservation districts instead of trying to manage them.

---

**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

This is a frustrating question. Conservation districts don't exist without the SCC. Not because the SCC is doing such a great job supporting CDs, but it's because we are tied together in an RCW. Period. No SCC, no CDs.

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 7, 2026 9:42 am  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 199.156.238.203  
Unique ID: 1458643901  
Location: 37.751, -97.822

---

**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.**

Federal agency partners - NRCS

---

**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

Ability to coordinate and collaborate w/Districts and NRCS to continue complimenting the enhancement of on farm service delivery.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?**

I think SCC has done a good job of avoiding scope creep to their mission and I'd like to see that continue.

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?**

additional funding sources would be a resource that if boosted would result in greater service delivery. I would not want to see the SCC go all in on a single effort, outside of open ended objectives, such as support to Districts.

---

**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

Drought and wildfire, both of which are forecasted to increase substantially in the coming years.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

Maintain trust. Voluntary conservation.

---

**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

Coordination for conservation districts and community organization.

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 7, 2026 4:57 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 198.238.202.135  
Unique ID: 1458831179  
Location: 47.1016, -123.0591

---

**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.**

State agency partners

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

Be the driving force to address the loss of farms/farmland.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

Connection to local communities.

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?**

SCC has local community connections, allows for focus on local priorities--that are rolled up to a state wide level. This local approach encourages buy-in and allows a much broader set of state priorities to be achieved.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?**

Dive face first into ag land support. Don't let other agencies slow that down.

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?**

Ag land viability, farmer support (equipment, mental health, etc.).

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

General anti-government sentiment can erode the trust built in rural communities.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

Trust and flexibility.

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

Ag land conservation.

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**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

Your local community connection.

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 7, 2026 5:41 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 162.10.9.31  
Unique ID: 1458847003  
Location: 37.3388, -121.8916

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.** SCC staff

---

**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?** Fulfill riparian restoration site plant needs by 100%

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?** Working together with CDs to ensure projects get on the ground

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?** Preserving and enhancing Washington's natural resources and environment to serve producers, conservationist, advocates, and citizens of the future.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?** Partnering more with Tribes

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 8, 2026 1:46 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 162.10.9.31  
Unique ID: 1459125326  
Locatio 37.3388, -121.8916

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.**

SCC staff

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

Building strong confidence in locally led conservation with state decision-makers.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

Partnership between local districts and state government.

---

**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?**

Supporting conservation districts to influence and guide people to take and maintain actions that preserve our shared natural resources.

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?**

I'm sure I'll think of something later :)

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?**

Getting districts the resources they need to be sustainable and effective.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

Reduction of resources across the board, with natural resource needs being left behind.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

Transparency, trust, flexibility, partnership

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**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

A collaborative process to develop the strategic plan, with transparency towards how we're moving towards that vision.

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

Ensuring that decision makers understand, value, and fund it.

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**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

An agency dedicated to understanding, advancing, and championing voluntary conservation. Without SCC, the needs of conservation districts would be buried into a larger agency with many other competing priorities.

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 8, 2026 3:19 pm  
Browser: Chrome 148.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 162.10.9.33  
Unique ID: 1459164694  
Location: 37.3388, -121.8916

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.** SCC staff

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?** Establish science-based systems that can demonstrate that voluntary conservation can be spatially targeted, independently verified, and credibly linked to measurable improvements in natural resource conditions that connect to important local and regional initiatives & goals - e.g., salmon recovery, climate resilience, water resources, critical area protections, food security/ag viability

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?** Collaboration-based innovation and problem solving from watersheds to the state level involving diverse interests and stakeholders

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?** SCC cultivates community-driven conservation approaches that make our state more resilient, healthy, and prosperous

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?** Be a leader in the cultivation/placement of the next generation of conservation professionals. Facilitate training, capacity building, and workforce development. Curate and develop scientific training and outreach for CDs, SCC, and partners.

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?** Collaborative governance, conflict resolution and coordinated resource management.

Given the many personalities, perspectives, and interests of our professional network, there are often conflicts and complex problems that create barriers to desired outcomes.

Investing in proven approaches that "grease the wheels" of collaboration and decision-making may unlock hidden potential in our social-conservation system and offer novel approaches to complicated problems

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

Trajectories of 3 systems colliding - (1) pressure on agricultural viability/farmland loss, (2) climate-related changes in water resources, wildfire, flooding, invasive species/diseases, and farming, (3) development pressures/population growth leading to landscape intensification and degradation of environmental conditions (e.g. pollution)

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

Trust  
Flexibility with accountability  
Adaptive Management as a core commitment  
Transparency

---

**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

Dial down the tension with stakeholders, staff, and partners  
  
Clarify strategic goals and directions as a community  
  
Establish clear pathways for SCC staff, CDs, and partners to be involved in co-developing and operationalizing goals  
  
Support DEI actions & strategies

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

Catalyze more resources into the voluntary conservation system in a sustained way that maximizes the potential of our community to achieve robust and effective conservation solutions, e.g., using science-based principles to guide resource allocations and work priorities

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**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

Funding for voluntary conservation programs and projects

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 8, 2026 4:18 pm  
Browser: Chrome 147.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 73.140.221.251  
Unique ID: 1459187749  
Location: 47.285, -122.5036

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**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.**

State agency partners

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

A fully integrated, measurably effective watershed health improvement for priority basins in Washington. The Commission would be able to demonstrate that voluntary, incentive-based conservation can reverse ecosystem decline in entire watersheds while maintaining a strong agricultural economy. The Commission's unique strength is its farmer-led, voluntary conservation model through local conservation districts. The biggest challenge, and opportunity-is proving that this model can deliver clear, measurable, landscape-level outcomes related to 1). Water quality (nutrients, temperature, sediment), 2). Habitat (especially salmon recovery), 3). Soil health and climate resilience, and 4). Agricultural viability. Currently, success is fragmented and site-specific. An extraordinary achievement would be a statewide map to demonstrate a visible, statewide success.

A second extraordinary thing would be that all conservation districts are capable of conducting secure, inclusive elections that are not protested, require public records requests, or have to go to court to hold another election. I have been on the Commission for 14 years and every year it seems to be the same story. The Commission has given the districts the tools, but all districts are unable to accomplish the mission. Elections will likely undergo more public scrutiny as districts get more money.

---

**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

The power of locally trusted, voluntary conservation. These trust-based relationships are built and maintained at the local level that move people to act. This action reaches where regulation can't. Most environmental outcomes the Commission cares about, such as soil health, nutrient runoff, habitat conditions are driven by thousands of individual land-use decisions. Those decisions don't shift because of mandates alone. They shift when a conservation district planner walks the field with a producer, advice is practical, and the landowner feels respected. That trust is earned over years, and it's incredibly hard for any centralized system to replicate.

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?**

To resonate with future generations, the Commission's purpose needs to feel bigger than programs and more personal than policy. It should connect to identity, place, and possibility. A purpose that inspires will help Washingtonians care for the land and water in ways that sustain life, strengthen communities, and leave this place better than we found it for generations to come. An example, "We are building an environment where every acre of farm, forest, and backyard contributes to clean water, healthy soil, resilient communities, and a future people are proud to inherit."

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**What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?**

1). Build a "Conservation Economy" for Washington. Instead of relying almost entirely on public cost-share, WSCC could help create new revenue streams for producers tied to environmental performance: Position conservation districts as brokers of ecosystem services, not just program implementers.

2). Make Washington a national leader in real-time land and water intelligence by creating a living, integrated system that combines:

- Remote sensing (satellite, drone)
- Continuous water monitoring
- Farm practice data (secure and producer-controlled)
- Climate and hydrologic modeling

This can result in real-time understanding of watershed conditions, predictive insights (e.g. if we change a practice, then water temperature drops by what amount?), and transparent dashboards for the public and legislature. Turn the Commission into the translator between data and on-the-ground change, not just a participant in monitoring.

3). Instead of cost-sharing individual practices, develop 5 to 10-year agreements with producers that focus on full system outcomes (profitability plus conservation). Bundle funding from multiple sources into one coherent plan.

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?**

A Statewide, Working Lands to Watersheds Transformation Initiative. Design, implement, and prove that every working landscape can measurably improve water, soil, habitat, and climate outcomes while strengthening farm viability. This integrates all the big challenges into one unified solution: Water quality impairment, Salmon recovery, Soil degradation and climate impacts, Agricultural economic pressure, and Fragmented programs and funding. Most efforts tackle these separately.

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

1). The political climate at the federal level. If the current political climate continues, partnering federal agencies will have fewer technical staff and less funds to advise, consult, and implement conservation practices. 2). Expertise and funds will be diverted away from climate change science and other areas of work that have become increasingly controversial. 3). The increasing age of the farming community and continued reduced profitability of farming, especially as political decisions make farming more difficult. 4). Pressure to prove voluntary conservation works. If voluntary approaches don't show clear results, regulatory pressure will increase. 5). Increasing development pressure on open space, including farmland, forests, and waters.

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

1). Trust. We build and protect trusted relationships with landowners, partners, and communities. We listen first, respect local leadership, and follow through on commitments. 2). Accountability for results. We are responsible for measurable outcomes, not just activity. 3). Stewardship for the long-term. We act with responsibility to future generations and leave land and water better than we found it. 4). We choose solutions that work in real conditions. Conservation must work for both people and the environment. 6). Adaptability. We stay flexible and responsive in a changing world and learn and improve continuously. 7. Measure impact. We connect efforts to maximize results and coordinate across partners and programs.

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**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

1). Make People Feel Like They Belong to Something Bigger. Shift from: "Participating in a program" to "Being part of a shared movement" Tell a clear, compelling story: "This is what we're building together in Washington." Regularly connect individual actions to visible outcomes (cleaner rivers, returning salmon, healthier farms). Celebrate collective impact, not just individual projects. Inspiration comes from feeling part of something meaningful. 2). Focus on Real Voices, Not Institutions. The most inspiring messengers are farmers, ranchers, tribal leaders, and local community members. Elevate peer stories ("people like me"), use authentic voices in communications, not just agency language, and create more opportunities for people to share their experiences. People engage when they see themselves in the story. 3). Expand Who Feels "Invited" Into Conservation. Many people may assume that conservation isn't for them. Actively reach small acreage owners, urban and peri-urban communities, and historically underserved groups. Partner with trusted local organizations instead of expecting people to come to SCC. 4). Make participation easy, clear, and worthwhile. Complexity is a hidden barrier. Simplify program access and messaging, provide clear entry points, offer visible, near-term benefits alongside long-term ones. If it's confusing or slow, people opt out, even if they care. 5). Build community, not just transactions. Move beyond one-on-one interactions to shared experiences. Support peer networks and learning groups, host field days, demonstrations, and informal gatherings, and encourage producer-to-producer mentoring. Inspiration grows through connection. 7). Reflect the Future of Washington. Younger and more diverse generations care about: Climate resilience, community and purpose-driven work.

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**What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?**

Proving, clearly and credibly, that voluntary conservation delivers measurable, landscape-scale results. Voluntary conservation already has strong local trust, willing participants, and proven practices. The system still faces a defining question: Can it reliably produce outcomes at the scale and speed needed?

---

**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

People would miss having a trusted local partner who helps them care for their land in ways that actually work, for them and for Washington. For all the good the Commission has done, we try, at times, to be all things to all people. With more ideas, we get more funding, to do more things. Some of these may be outside the mission of the Commission. That begins to spread staff too thin. Also, other agencies may already be doing this work. This leads to more mission creep. Building a program that is wide and shallow will start to crumble when state and/or federal (not to mention county) funding start to decline as is projected at both levels in the near-term. Do what we do the best and show results, so people won't miss us.

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Form Name: Strategic Planning 2027  
Submission Time: May 11, 2026 1:19 pm  
Browser: Chrome 148.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 66.119.207.70  
Unique ID: 1459848399  
Location: 46.2515, -119.1034

---

**Please select your organization and role type (if applicable) from the drop-down list below.**

Conservation district managers

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**If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?**

Creating the balance of natural resource utilization for sustainability and meeting the goals for protected resources and economic stability at the local level.

Creating the trust and promoting voluntary incentives.

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**What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?**

The ability to work with Conservation Districts to coordinate the natural resource needs at the local level and provide education and outreach legislators and other agencies.

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**How would you describe our purpose in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?**

The local voice is heard and funded directed to the needs at the local level not the wishes of others that do not understand the issues of working on the land.

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**If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?**

Protecting working lands through helping with profitability, not conservation easements with one time pay outs

More education to help with the regulatory burdens

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**What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?**

Working lands and farm land protections and incentives to prevent development and loss of production

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**What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)**

Trust and accountability and staying with the core mission to be grass roots and non regulatory.

Not worry about having a larger agency

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**How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?**

More focus on working with districts rather than bigger programs and more funds at the commission level.

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**If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?**

The education and assistance with regulatory compliance.

Districts will be weakened and unable to provide the TA and coordination of state agency assistance at the local level

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# State Conservation Commission strategic planning survey

May 2026

## Vision

- 1) *If the State Conservation Commission could achieve one extraordinary thing in the next 5 years, what should it be?*

SCC adopting riparian buffer guidelines that fully protect water quality, including stream temperature, and providing financial resources (long-term rental contracts on riparian woody vegetated buffer, implementation and maintenance crews) to support and implement buffers at the local level would be an extraordinary step towards restoring, conserving, and protecting WA state natural resources and maintaining ag viability into the future. SCC adopting minimum core zone buffers that are backed by science and that will effectively address high stream temperature (and are supported by sister agencies- Ecology and Fish and Wildlife) would be a substantial step forward for the state's goals of clean and cool water and working towards supporting climate resiliency- outcomes which will benefit all WA communities and have a positive impact on agricultural viability.

Alignment between SCC and state agencies about riparian buffers (e.g., width and composition) would also help unify the message that functioning riparian habitats are critical for keeping streams cool and clean and would provide opportunities for synergistic efforts to implement riparian buffers and avoid mixed messages. Promoting and financing science-based riparian buffers that will fully protect water quality (e.g., Ecology's Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture) and having Conservation Districts lead local efforts to implement minimum, science-based widths, in partnership with other local, state, and federal agencies has the potential to result in extraordinary outcomes for the health of Washington's waterways and communities.

- 2) *What do you believe is our most inspiring strength that we should build upon?*

Connection to the local community. Conservation Districts are the conduit for resources, guidance, financial assistance, technical assistance, etc. for local communities – no other environmental organization or agency has that kind of relationship at the local level. This is community connection and influence that can affect real change and paradigm shifts in community mindsets towards what conservation means and the vast potential for sustainable coexistence of effective conservation measures on working lands.

3) *How would you describe the purpose of our agency in a way that excites future generations of Washingtonians?*

Resiliency. Future generations of Washingtonians now more than ever are tuned into how we can become more resilient in terms of restoring, conserving, and ultimately protecting our natural resources and how those efforts also support the resiliency of the land to grow crops. Our potential success or failure as Washingtonians to adapt and become resilient in the future climate of WA will depend on wide scale adoption of conservation practices, such as riparian forest buffers, no-till, cover crops, efficient irrigation, etc.. We need to quickly implement practices that are driven by natural resource concerns, soil health, and science – this needs to be done at a much faster rate than is currently happening, understanding that many of the changes made today often take time before their outcomes are fully realized.

**Mission and innovation**

4) *What bold opportunities should SCC explore that we haven't yet considered?*

Stepping away from status quo approaches to riparian restoration and actively engaging with technical experts (including state agencies) and consulting existing guidance (TMDLs, WDFW Priority Habitat and Species, Ecology's Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture) to develop funding approaches and set buffer recommendations to promote and plant effective riparian forest buffers on land currently in some kind of production – this is one of the primary issues that need to be addressed. Up to this point, riparian forest buffer plantings occur opportunistically, often in areas of relative low resource concern (marginal pasture land, reed canary grass, underplanting conifers to expedite successional forests, etc) or at widths and composition insufficient to fully protect and/or restore water quality. Low hanging fruit projects are good, but we need to address the acute pollution problems with solutions that prioritize water quality and habitat – agricultural ground converted to riparian forest buffer at a large scale would be bold and there is a lot of opportunity there. Temperature pollution has rapidly become among the highest priority pollutants in Washington, across both the east and west sides of the state. As the number of temperature-impaired waterways increase, bold action to implement effective riparian forest buffers across all lands is desperately needed.

5) *If we had unlimited resources for one effort at SCC, what would you choose and why?*

Development of a program to implement effective riparian forest buffers on agricultural ground that works and is quickly scalable and provides additional incentives for upland practices when riparian forest buffers are fully implemented. It would need to address

acute pollution sources while also providing future temperature mitigation and habitat, adding to our resiliency potential. Riparian buffers may be a basic BMP, but when we think about climate resiliency and sustaining Washington communities and farmers into the future, it is perhaps the most critical to get on the landscape. Coupling riparian restoration and increased funding for additional practices would help to further support whole farm conservation and production-based needs while simultaneously promoting riparian restoration.

6) *What emerging trends do you think we need to be mindful of?*

Less community engagement and increased disconnection to the natural environment. Both of these can result in increased challenges to voluntary implementation of conservation measures- as benefits to the environment and the broader community may not be valued as highly, lessening the draw to implement conservation practices.

The aging of farmers and challenges of new/existing farmers given costs and other market variables is another trend to be mindful of. It will continue to be important to provide incentive/reimbursement rates to minimize out-of-pocket costs while also strongly connecting incentives to expected environmental outcomes. We need programs that set clear environmental/ecological outcomes but match those expectations with high levels of financial and technical support.

## **Values**

7) *What values should guide every decision SCC makes moving forward? (For example, accountability, trust, flexibility, etc.?)*

What is best for natural resources and climate change resiliency. Voluntary conservation should be guided by implementation of practices that will result in meaningful and lasting protection of shared natural resources. Examples of values include environmental protection, ecological responsibility, climate and farm resiliency – supporting conservation planning and practice implementation that prevents pollution, protects and promotes thriving and resilient ecosystems, and builds climate and farm resiliency.

8) *How can we make SCC's community feel more inspiring and inclusive?*

More work on environmental curriculum in schools and expanding outdoor programs for youth. Offering more opportunities for local government, NGOs, state and federal agencies, and the public to better understand SCC's program priorities, funding programs and initiatives, and program outcomes.

## **Goals and legacy**

9) *What's the most meaningful impact we could have on voluntary conservation in Washington?*

Offering voluntary conservation based upon the implementation practices informed by best available science - to ensure that actions recommended by SCC and CDs and implemented by landowners are effective to protect and restore resources, and to support climate resiliency and sustainable agricultural communities. It's also important to communicate the need for producers to address all resource concerns and to offer financial assistance that limits out-of-pocket costs and provide continued technical assistance to ensure implemented practices (structural, vegetative and management) are performing as expected.

10) *If SCC disappeared tomorrow, what would people miss most about us?*

Connection to the local community. Conservation Districts are the conduit for resources, guidance, financial assistance, technical assistance, etc. for local communities – no other environmental organization or agency has that kind of relationship at the local level.