Washington State Conservation Commission

Approved Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2026

Regular Business Meeting ~

The Washington State Conservation Commission (Commission/SCC) met virtually as well as in-person on Thursday, May 21, 2026, in Zillah, Washington. Chair Cherie Kearney called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Note: All meeting materials can be found on our meetings webpage. You will find the meeting packet with background information, presentations and past meeting information.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Cherie Kearney, Chair, Governor Appointee
Wade Troutman, Vice-chair, Elected central region
Larry Cochran, Elected east region
Amy McKay, Washington Association of Conservation Districts
Brook Beeler, Department of Ecology
Dani Gelardi, Department of Agriculture
Bill Blake, Elected west region
Jim Kropf, Washington State University (online)
Katie Rose Allen, Department of Natural Resources (online)

A quorum was present.

COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT

James Thompson, Executive Director
Alicia McClendon, Administrative Assistant
Allisa Carlson, Central WA Regional Manager
Bill Eller, Special Projects Coordinator
Dani Madrone, Director of Policy & Governmental Affairs
Jessica Wilson, Chief Engagement Officer
Kate Delavan, Deputy Director
Lori Gonzalez, Executive Assistant
Sarah Groth, Chief Financial Officer
Tami Stubbs, SE WA Regional Manager

Additional staff are listed in the attachments.

PARTNERS REPRESENTED

Angie Reseland, Dept of Fish and Wildlife (online)
Roylene Comes at Night, USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Nick Vira, USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (online)
Craig Nelson, WA Association of District Employees (online)
Tom Salzer, WA Association of Conservation Districts (online)
Heather Wendt, WA Association of Conservation Districts
Ryan Baye, WA Association of Conservation Districts (online)

All other guests are listed in the following attachments:

Attachment A – online registration/attendance sheet
Attachment B – in-person sign-in sheet

ACTION MINUTES TAKEN

The meeting was opened with Commissioner roll call taken by Alicia McClendon. A quorum was present. Following roll call, introductions were made for guests attending both in person and online.

Chair Kearney asked for any additions or corrections to the agenda; three additions to the Commission Operations portion of the agenda were added per Chair Kearney's request. Policy on Policies Open Public Comment, Policy on Policies review, and Commission meeting start time were added to the agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

Draft March 19, 2026- Business Meeting Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Cochran to approve the draft March 19, 2026 Business Meeting Minutes.

Seconded by Commissioner McKay. Motion passed.

Out of State Travel Requests

Motion by Commissioner Troutman to approve the SCC executive director and a commission member to travel to Grand Rapids, MI for the NACD Summer Meeting July 17-22, 2026.

Seconded by Commissioner Blake. Motion passed.

DISTRICT OPERATIONS

Conservation District Supervisor Appointments

WESTERN REGION – Commissioner Blake

Motion by Commissioner Blake to appoint the individuals listed below to full-term positions as conservation district board supervisors.

Seconded by Commissioner Gelardi. Motion passed.

Alice Lombard, Clark Conservation District; Lynn Simpson, Cowlitz Conservation District; Richard Boyer, Grays Harbor Conservation District; Alfred Latham, Jefferson County Conservation District; Burr Mosby, King Conservation District; Robert Gilby, Kitsap Conservation District; Bruce McDonald, Lewis Conservation District; Michael O'Day, Mason Conservation District; Frank Kaech, Pacific Conservation District; Lynn Bahrych, San Juan Islands Conservation District; Margery Hite, Skagit Conservation District; Tom Langston, Wahkiakum Conservation District; Suzanne Snydar, Whatcom Conservation District; Jennifer Abermanis, Whidbey Island Conservation District.

CENTRAL REGION – Commissioner Troutman

Motion by Commissioner Troutman to appoint the individuals listed below to full-term positions as conservation district board supervisors.

Seconded by Commissioner Beeler. Motion passed.

Michael Broeckel, Adams Conservation District; Bridget Gallant, Benton Conservation District; Dan Roseburg, Columbia Basin Conservation District; Karen Van de Graaf-Erickson, Eastern Klickitat Conservation District; Brian Cortese, Kittitas County Conservation District; Cindy Reed, North Yakima Conservation District; Jerry Asmussen, Okanogan Conservation District; Dirk Van Slageren, South Yakima Conservation District; Valerie Hoy, Underwood Conservation District.

EASTERN REGION – Commissioner Cochran

Motion by Commissioner Cochran to appoint the individuals listed below to full-term and mid-term positions as conservation district board supervisors.

Seconded by Commissioner Blake. Motion passed.

Richard Witters, Asotin County Conservation District; Joann Marshall, Ferry Conservation District; Stephen Schmid, Pend Oreille Conservation District; Mitchell Jamison, Pine Creek Conservation District; Stuart Elliott, Rock Lake Conservation District; Tom Miller, Spokane Conservation District; Justin Gagnon, Columbia Conservation District.

Petition for inclusion of the City of Pasco into the Franklin Conservation District

Motion by Commissioner McKay to approve the petition for inclusion of the City of Pasco within the boundaries of the Franklin Conservation District.

Seconded by Commissioner Troutman. Motion passed.

2026 Conservation District Elections

Motion by Commissioner Troutman: As per RCW 89.08.190 and WAC 135-110-760, and after reviewing the staff memo dated May 8, 2026, I move that the Commission adopt the staff canvassing of the election returns and certify and announce the results of 44 conservation district elections listed in the "2026 Conservation District Election Results" as the official winners.

Seconded by Commissioner Gelardi. Motion passed.

Commissioners Cochran and McKay recused themselves.

2026 Conservation District Election Results
Adams – Curtis R. Henning
Asotin County – Jesse C. Greene
Benton – Michael Sackschewsky
Cascadia – Junell Wentz
Central Klickitat – Miland Walling
Clark – Linda Lorraine Schmitz
Columbia – Rory Francis Donohue
Columbia Basin – John Preston
Cowlitz – Joe Shulke
Eastern Klickitat – Jason Blain

Ferry – Eric Bracken
Foster Creek – Douglas Poole
Franklin – Nathan D. Bengen
Grays Harbor – Heather Ryvore Smith
Jefferson County – Julie Marie Boggs
King – Csenka Favorini-Csorba
Kitsap – Justin Domingus
Kittitas County – Matt Eslinger
Lewis – Tracy Spencer
Lincoln County – Ryan Nelson Wiater
Mason – Larry Boltz
North Yakima – William Frank Hendrix
Okanogan – Michelle J. Martin
Pacific – Jim Olsen
Palouse – Larry Cochran
Pend Oreille – George Stuivenga
Pierce – Mindy Roberts
Pine Creek – Tyson L. Carter
Pomeroy – Luke Ledgerwood
Rock Lake – Doug W. Schuster
San Juan Islands – Andrew Pownall Jones
Skagit – Jedidah Holmes
Snohomish – Spencer Fuentes
South Douglas – Michael S. Lesky
South Yakima – Kristyn Mensonides-Cruz
Spokane – Sara Schlake
Stevens County – Andy A. Kroiss
Thurston – David J. Lyall
Underwood – Elizabeth Bella
Wahkiakum – Brad Bortner
Walla Walla County – Jesse McCaw
Whatcom – Jim Shaver
Whidbey Island – Teri Jo Summer Reiger
Whitman – Amy McKay

COMMISSION OPERATIONS

SCC Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and Continuity of Operations Plan 2026 Update

Motion by Commissioner Cochran to approve the adoption of the annually updated 2026 CEMP/COOP.

Seconded by Commissioner Beeler. Motion passed.

Policy on Policies Open Public Comment

Commissioner McKay moves to direct staff to open public comment on a revision of the policy on polices to shorten the public comment period from 45 days to 30 days.

Seconded by Commissioner Troutman. Motion passed.

Policy on Policies Review

Commissioner Beeler moves to direct staff to review the policy on policies, make recommendations for revisions, and bring recommendations back to the Commission at a future meeting.

Seconded by Commissioner Blake. Motion passed.

Commission Meeting Start Time

Commissioner McKay moves to direct staff to explore, and if determined to be feasible, begin the expedited rulemaking process to remove the Commission business meeting start time and day of the week from the WAC.

Seconded by Commissioner Gelardi. Motion passed.

POLICY, BUDGET AND FINANCE

Funding Approval for Fiscal Year 2027

Motion by Commissioner Blake to approve the funding proposals for the fiscal year 2027 as listed below.

Seconded by Commissioner Beeler. Motion passed.

General Fund State Operating Funding Allocation Proposals

1. SCC Operations: SCC staff ("staff") recommend continuing administration activities supported in the 2026 fiscal year with adjustments to reflect current appropriations and to align staff and operational capacity in areas identified by the Executive Director. Costs included in this category include but are not limited to funding for staff salaries and benefits; staff professional development; travel; IT; goods and services; rent; and grants and contracts (e.g. Center for Technical Development, Washington Association of District Employees, Envirothon, and Washington Association of Conservation Districts.) The funding available for these activities is $3,516,915 for fiscal year 2027.

2. Implementation Grant Program: Staff recommend funding the Implementation Grant Program at $5,702,085 per fiscal year. This program provides operating dollars to conservation districts for a variety of purposes including staffing, rent, programs, outreach, and goods and services. The Legislature appropriated $1,900,000 per fiscal year for the 25-27 biennium specifically for Conservation Technical Assistance ("Implementation"). Staff recommend contributing the same amount of general-fund operating as the prior biennium of $3,802,085 per fiscal year for Implementation in addition to the amount appropriated by the Legislature specifically for CTA. Staff recommend Implementation is divided evenly across the 45 districts, with each district receiving $126,713 per fiscal year, the same amount as fiscal year 2026.

3. Engineering Allocation: The Legislature appropriated $2,135,000 for FY27 for the Professional Engineering Grant Program. The program guidelines direct SCC to first allocate $250,000 per fiscal year to each of the 9 engineering areas. Any available additional engineering funds may then be requested either by a cooperating engineering area program or by individual conservation districts. However, the appropriation for this biennium is not sufficient to provide the minimum prescribed funding of $250,000 per area. At the June 18, 2025 special meeting, Commissioners authorized splitting all available engineering funding evenly across the 9 areas. Staff recommend maintaining that structure for fiscal year 2027 and providing $237,222.22 to each of the 9 engineering areas.

4. Task Orders: The operating budget provides funding for SCC to continue NRCS task orders at the same amount as fiscal year 2026 of up to $125,000 per fiscal year. SCC staff are working with districts and NRCS to prepare task orders to allow districts to begin work July 1, 2026. Staff propose providing up to $125,000 per fiscal year for NRCS task orders developed in consultation with NRCS.

5. Sustainable Farms & Fields: The operating budget provides $660,000 per fiscal year for the Sustainable Farms and Fields grant program (SFF). Staff propose awarding up to $660,000 in accordance with SFF programmatic guidelines. This is a reduction of $750,000 from fiscal year 2026.

CCA Natural Climate Solutions Account Operating Funding Proposals

1. Forest Health & Community Wildfire Resiliency: The 25-27 operating budget provided $2,500,000 per biennium out of the natural climate solutions account for the Forest Health & Community Wildfire Resiliency program. At the May 2025 meeting staff proposed and the commission approved awarding up to $2,500,000 for the biennium in accordance with the Forest Health & Community Wildfire Resiliency program guidelines. In the 2026 supplemental budget SCC received an additional $1,250,000 in forest health funding. SCC staff are proposing to use the new allocation of $1,250,000 in accordance with existing forest health program guidelines.

Chair Kearney adjourned the meeting at 1:22 p.m.

Attachment A

Zoom Registration Report for May 21, 2026

	First Name	Last Name		First Name	Last Name
1	Jodi	Prout	21	Mike	Poteet
2	Margaret	McKeown	22	Kim	Williams
3	Sarah	Moorehead	23	Nick	Peak
4	Alan	Chapman	24	Brad	Riehle
5	Nick	vira	25	Megan	Stewart
6	Paul	D'Agnolo	26	Craig	Nelson
7	Anna	Lael	27	Tom	Salzer
8	nicole	boyes	28	Shana	Joy
9	Angie	Reseland	29	Hilary	Aten
10	Jennifer	Coe	30	Sarah	Moorehead
11	Virginia	Shogren	31	Brandy	Reed
12	B'Elanna	Rhodehamel	32	Lori	Gonzalez
13	Jennifer	Boie	33	Josh	Giuntoli
14	Kara	Kaelber	34	Kris	Neely
15	Karla	Heinitz	35	Jim	Kropf
16	Zorah	Oppenheimer	36	dean	hellie
17	Sarah	Jones	37	Ryan	Baye
18	Kohl	LeRoy	38	Ryan	Williams
19	Karen	Hills	39	Katie Rose	Allen
20	Paige	DeChambeau	40	Joy	GARITONE

Attachment B

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Please Sign In

	Name	Entity
1.	James Thompson	See
2.	Sarah Gran	SCC
3.	Mike Tobin	NYCD
4.	Wade Goutman	FCCD
5.	Heather Wendt	WACD
6.	Alicia McClendon	SCC
7.	Lori Gonzalez	SCC
8.	LARRY COCHRAN	SCC
9.	Dani Madrone	SCC
10.	Bill Eller	SCC
11.	Allisa Carlson	SCC
12.	Savannah Crnick	South Yakima CD
13.	Rodney Heit	" " "
14.	Kate Delavan	SCC
15.	Nikki Atkins	Lewis CD
16.	Jeff Schibel	LCCD
17.	Dirk Van Stryland	SPCD
18.	Brook Beeler	Commissioner
19.	Bill Blake	Commissioner

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	Name	Entity
20.	Raylene Comes At Night	NRCS
21.	Dani Gelardi	WSDA/commissioner
22.	Becca Hebron	FCCD
23.	Cherie Kearney	Commissioner
24.	Amy McKay	Commissioner
25.	Tami Stubbs	SCC
26.	Jessica Wilson	SCC
27.	Hilary Aten	SCC
28.	Kara Kaelber	Franklin CD
29.	Riley Zionce	Franklin CD
30.	Ky Shinn	SYCD
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