

SCC- CD Roundtable Notes 2.13.25

SCC Leadership Remarks- Kate

- James is at NACD, Kate acting ED for a little bit longer
- Sadly, Kaisha Walker has taken a new position at another agency
- March 20th is next SCC meeting with tour on 19th hosted by Grays Harbor
- Several programs undergoing updates to guidelines for upcoming biennium

Budget, Financial, Year-End and Grant Manual Updates – Sarah Groth

- **Budget**
 - State is under a budget deficit
 - We have been asked to identify cost saving measures for current FY as well as future FY's
 - Discussions occurring between agencies, Gov office and legislature
 - We will share more as we learn more as lots is happening
 - Although direction may come from Gov. or OFM, Legislature ultimately makes budget decisions
 - We are making sure to communicate not only how cuts would affect the Commission but also very importantly the effect on districts and their communities
 - We will not be able to make fiscal year-end funds available this year due to budget savings directives
- **Grants Manual**
 - Ombuds group meeting February 19
 - CD representatives selected from volunteers – 2 from each RM area. 10 CD representatives along with RMS, Heather Wendt, James, Kate and Sarah will be at the meeting
 - Have made some adjustments to the manual to address comments received prior to the meeting so we can focus on what's missing
 - Thanks to respondents to the grant manual survey!! 20 responses received.

Irrigation Efficiencies Update and Year-End Program Reminders – Jon Culp

- Reallocating Irrigation Efficiencies funds to ready projects and getting authorizations finalized
- Make sure to be communicating with cooperators for all programs to make sure projects are still on track so any funds that will be unused can be redistributed if possible. Let program managers know as soon as possible

Legislative Update – Dani Madrone

- **Budget**
 - Biggest priority is budget
 - Legislature will put forward their own budget with Gov Inslee's budget as a starting point
 - Next revenue forecast March 18th so will have a better idea how budget is shaping up
 - First operating budget should start showing up about a week after the revenue forecast with capital later
 - Legislature looking at a variety of revenue bill options
 - Making legislators aware of forest health and community wildfire needs – how much not backfilling the one-time 10 million received last biennium not to mention the \$1 million reduction in ongoing funds. A huge impact
 - Policy cutoff I next Friday, February 21. Any bills not out of policy committees will be dead
- **Bills**
 - No alarming bills so far
 - Rates and Charges (HB 1488) – moved from committee. SB 5510 on schedule to be moved from committee February 13
 - Sustainable Farms and Fields bills moving forward (SB 5391)

- Tracking SB 5155 (Extending a program to streamline the environmental permitting process for salmon recovery projects) to make sure SCC and CDs are included – RGP and NRI included
- SB 5475 – maintenance funding for salmon restoration projects not expected to move forward. Messaging will be ongoing in the future.
- SB 5117 – Protecting Agriculture. Expansive looking at most actions govt. could make that affects agriculture and economic impacts to agriculture
- In weekly meetings with Natural Resources and Environment staff from Govs’ office
- Met with Owen Rowe, Gov. Ferguson’s senior natural resources policy advisor. It was very productive and SCC was the first agency he met with. Offered to come to a Commission meeting and will work to get him on-site at CDs
- Not sure about Gov Ferguson’s priorities related to natural resources. Will be trying to learn more as we move forward
- Note from Zorah – emphasize forest health as a public safety matter

Ripple Effects Update - Jodi Prout

- 2023 proviso to develop and implement a public campaign about riparian management
- Separate from RGP outreach funds
- Working group from CDs has been assisting in developing the messaging
- Focus on collaboration with CDs, individual actions
- **Press Release:** <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WASCC/bulletins/3cc9bda>
- Will be sending out a message to CD managers to review materials
 - <https://vimeo.com/1046595552>
 - https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/euiqogkylq68i7rhfodiv/010625_WSCC_RiparianBuffers_RackCard_GeneralAudience_ENG_F.pdf?rlkey=cylfwegm6wx16fw9ux765zb6s&st=lgkm6ufv&dl=0
- Mindful of prescriptive-sounding terms such as “buffer” and “riparian” in marketing materials
- Does not prescribe measurements such as buffer widths, etc.
- Working on a dedicated **website** with a resource library for the public
 - <https://www.conserve.wa.gov/>
- A comment from the group -Be careful not to have PS Caucus speaking for whole state in some way
 - While emulating “Better Ground” *structure*, actively working to avoid any west side bias
- Materials will be rolling out through May – billboards, advertisements, etc.
- Billboards targeted in rural areas, not urban centers
- jprout@scc.wa.gov, 360-819-6394

CD Fiscal Staff Group Invitation – Cori Turntine

- There is a standing CD financial forum with approximately 50 members
- Looking for volunteers to provide Cori some assistance - 2 more volunteers to assist to help it be a better resource
- Looking to get this resource built up to be a better, valuable resource
- Valuable to have both experienced and newer staff to get broad range of perspective
- cori-turntine@sccd.org

CREP Rental Payment Assistance – Brian

- Rolling out SCC (1-year) rental payments in Whatcom County as FSA audit is completed and affected participants are finalized
- Audit completed
- Getting positive responses from participants who want to take advantage of the option
- Last checks for remainder of state should be done by Oct 1st
- Will be asking for reappropriation of the funds that were provided by the legislature to make rental payments

ISG Work update – Thomas

- Still working on getting data structured and data governance
- Working with WaTech to advance platform work
- Will be seeing a VSP template soon
- Looking to get the template down to less than 100 pages
- ISG also working on Climate Commitment Act reporting forms
- Working through other programs

SCC Programs Update

- **RGP – Amy Martin**
 - Letters have gone out to Tribes' Chairs and Natural Resource Directors (or equivalent) and an example letter was sent to district managers. If you have partnerships with Tribes please encourage them to engage with us on the guidelines and the program- comments of support or revision are both valuable.

WACD Update

- **Ryan:**
 - Rates and Charges Bill hopefully out of committee tomorrow. House bill did remove language about cap on county administration fees to satisfy county auditors. Likely to see Senate Bill with same amendment
 - Budget will start picking up
 - Work occurring related to assist farmers affected by the Climate Commitment Act
 - Big thanks for districts that attended Legislative Days
- **Heather:**
 - **NACD**
 - WACD had 3 resolutions at NACD
 - All 3 passed
 - Spring DC fly-in coming up – Washington will be represented
 - Working with SCC on a spring all-districts meeting

Other Topics

- **Federal Funds**
 - A lot of moving parts and changes in understanding
 - Please keep in contact with project managers for any funds that could be affected
 - SCC and WACD keeping in contact with NRCS
- **Zorah**
 - Elections study
 - Corey Briar from the *WA State Institute for Public Policy* reached out to Zorah and she realized his numbers were not matching Zorah's numbers
 - Corey had the misunderstanding that CDs only included unincorporated areas which is not the case
 - He may be reaching back out to some CDs