

SCC- CD Roundtable Notes 3.12.25

SCC Leadership Remarks – James Thompson

- Budget
 - Revenue forecast coming on 18th
 - Expect budgets from Senate and House on 24th
 - No sure what these will look like yet
 - Positive news on CCA funding from recent auction – price up with \$50 million more than expected collected
 - First priority as budget shakes out is to keep everyone employed. Keep CTA funding intact
 - Will communicate budget developments as quickly as possible
 - **Question:** As we start to see more information on budget – what are the SCC’s plans for engaging CDs around budget priorities – to make sure there is a collective voice coming from CDs and SCC? **A:** Will be working with WACD. Ongoing discussions from priorities discussed at Yakima meeting last year. We use what we have heard in meetings. Welcome more feedback. Setting up a similar meeting for this spring. **Comment:** WACD has been getting a lot of feedback from CDs and re-aligning priorities from district feedback. This district feedback is make or break for districts
- Ombuds group met in Spokane to review Grants and Contracts Manual
 - Opportunities for improvement identified
 - Will continue working on improvements into the future, some can be made short-term and some will take longer
 - **Question:** Has anyone seen any major points of contention or major needs that will be difficult to work through? Are there ideas that will not be able to pan out? **A:** Not so far but there are shorter term actions and others that will take longer. Sarah G. will be providing an update during this meeting.
- Working with a group that specializes in project management
 - Working through Riparian Grant Program
 - Will be looking at VSP next
 - Possible use same structure across all grant programs

Legislative Updates – Dani Madrone

- Yesterday was cut-off for bills to move between chambers
- Several bills that have died, none moving forward that we hate.
- [SB 5391](#) - SFF technical adjustments still moving
- [HB 1539](#) – wildfire mitigation and intersection with insurance still moving. Hearing today.
- Budget Process:
 - Auction revenue from CCA is up. OFM advising Legislature to be cautious with appropriating it. May see less cuts from CCA funds and maybe boosts but unsure
 - See note above on revenue forecast and budget releases
 - Continue to meet with Legislatures and provide info around pain points such as Forest Health. Meeting with Sen Chapman to discuss possibilities around Capital budget. Don’t want unintended consequences between Operating and Capital funding amounts for Forest Health
 - Working on proviso language for Riparian Grant Program.
 - Emphasizing CTA
 - Communications with legislature regarding Gov’s budget proposal around Science Hub and Tribal liaison position
- We do have weekly meetings with WACD and have direct communications with districts – please feel free to reach out to Dani.
- Not sure when we will see budget- could be an extended session. Hopefully by June.
- Gov Ferguson has indicated he will veto any budget that doesn’t have \$100 million for police

- Working on scheduling a workshop with WACD on engagement for next session – June 12th
 - **Comment:** Important to have all parties involved in the discussions – program managers and RMs as they hear from districts.
 - **Comment:** Having that session being discussion based and a collaborative work session where we all get to identify and discuss challenges and priorities would be really beneficial over a lecture-style meeting that only shares information one way.
- **Question:** Is there any interest in adding permanent protection back into RGP proviso language. **A:** Haven't heard any but will hear more from Sen. Chapman and Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. Will be hard to be successful with implementation of permanent protection with current capacity.
- Riparian Roundtable – what will a regulatory backstop look like? This is a point of contention among stakeholders. 4 recommendations are being developed. Recommendation 2 is of interest – voluntary conservation/RGP. Some confusion/concerns expressed to facilitators around RGP recommendation work. Frustration being expressed about facilitation process and reception to our input.
 - Relationships between stakeholders are being developed
- **Comment:** Discussions in Puget Sound Partnership around Action Agenda about riparian approach – comment expressed in that forum around voluntary conservation approach being ineffective. Very concerning.
 - Brian Cochrane is SCC representative on that committee – Dani will follow up on what he is hearing.
 - **Comment:** Conversations seem to be more political in nature rather than technical. Might be helpful to have someone like Kate or Dani involved as they have more political experience/involvement.
 - **Comment:** Very important for us to be talking about voluntary stewardship in riparian workflow discussions and forums as it is an important tool in the robust toolbox and not necessarily from a territorial standpoint.

Fiscal Update, Grants and Contracts Manual Update – Sarah Groth

- **Grants Manual**
 - Met with group of 10 CD reps in Spokane in a facilitated discussion
 - 20 survey responses
 - Clear that there is more work to do than we have time for this current manual update
 - Identified biggest, most concerning topics to take on for this manual update
 - Table of expenditures for grant programs – what is allowed and not allowed
 - Reimbursement timing in vouchering for expenditures addressed
 - Removing no-activity voucher requirement
 - Removing requirement for new comp. rates each Jan 1 if there are no changes
 - Several wording edits addressed for clarity
 - Need to comb through, pull-apart and reorganize the manual over time.
 - Will have future meeting(s) with the group over the next biennium.
 - **Question:** Appreciate the track changes copy. In past years we have also seen document with comments – such as survey responses with SCC responses. Did not see this time. Can that be sent out? **A:** Will include that in the May packet after comment period. **Question:** What about the recent survey? **A:** Facilitator should have this information in their report for the May packet.
 - Sarah expressed great thanks to Courtney as well as all who have provided input!
 - Saw comments about inconsistencies between program guidelines. Update program guidelines is another piece of work that will be occurring.

Riparian Update – Amy Martin

- Thanks to all CD staff that have been working with Amy through projects and RGP guidelines
- Memo to Commission highlights main changes as well as index.
- Scheduling a webinar in April to go through an overview of changes in guidelines
- Will be meeting with Northwest Indian Fisheries tomorrow to discuss guidelines and have sent red-lined versions to tribes for comment.
- Interest expressed in doing a better job of communicating progress and accomplishments.

- Actual buffer widths being put on the ground is close to 150'. This info will be included in fact sheet.
- Main changes:
 - Updating maintenance eligibility from 5 to 10 years
 - Removing permanent protection. Capacity is an issue.
 - More time working on tiered-incentive piece to refine calculation and payment structure to ensure site potential buffers are incentivized.
 - Aligning guidelines more clearly with budget proviso language with salmon recovery areas, also Redband and Bull Trout in the NE.
 - Reaffirming minimal buffer widths will align with WA NRCS standard of 50 feet in salmon bearing areas.
 - There will be some exceptions – one example is residential properties.
 - Please see the memo in the [Commission Meeting packet](#).
 - Note to review funded projects for progress by June 30th and turn back funding as needed. Did request that unexpended funds be reappropriated.
 - Did hear about need to start work July 1 – looking at process to award funds ahead of July 1.
 - **Question:** How confident are we in funding to be able to do this? **A:** Not all funds have been appropriated. Pretty confident in reappropriation but will have to wait and see. Hoping to see budget outcome by June that will give confidence.
 - **Question:** Update on tiered incentives on first application cycle? What is needed to move forward? **A:** 11 potential contracts. Want to refine payment structure for tiered incentives. Want to make sure we have right agreement language in place for CDs to work with landowners. Will be reviewing with Attorney General. **Comment:** Need arrangement to be a sure thing to implement this FY. We are out on a limb with landowners.
 - **Comments:** Long-term contracts but can't guarantee funds year to year. There is risk although there is good confidence with reappropriation. Path for multi-year contracts between CDs and Commission being developed. Will be discussed with Commissioners.

CCA Reporting – Karen Hills

- If your district received funding for a Community Engagement project, Forest Health and Community Resiliency, some Sustainable Farms and Fields, or Riparian Grant Program there are additional reporting requirements due to the CCA.
- Had a webinar and created an FAQ. Housed on our CCA webpage on SCC website: <https://www.scc.wa.gov/cd/cca>
- **Due July 10th**

Ripple Effects Update - Jodi Prout

- Campaign is being advertised through May on various media
- E-mail last week to CD Managers that includes media outlets and locations
- Was a directive from Gov Inslee and SCC selected to lead campaign
- Recognize timing isn't ideal due to funding cycles and fluctuations – the process started well before the current budget difficulties were known
- Worked with a social marketing firm to select locations and strategic targeting through evaluation of various factors
- Website: <https://www.conserve.wa.gov>
 - Feedback Form: <https://www.conserve.wa.gov/feedback>
- Box of campaign materials will be sent to each CD for local efforts
 - Let Jodi know if you would like to opt out of these materials.
- Will be developing bare-root planting guide to be available by June.
 - **Feedback Survey:** <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/a4a7eef9a45f431e8fa93a6de5c99334>
 - **Comment:** WACD does have a bareroot planting guide available, if that will be helpful: <https://wacdpmc.org/publications-%26-brochures>

End of Fiscal Year Webinar – Shana Joy

- Wed, April 9th at 10:30.
 - 90 minutes is target.
- Walking through everything about closing out grants for FY-end
- Will record and post it.

WACD Update

- Shared a copy of WACD legislative priorities to legislators, budget writers
- Reach out to legislators about your budget priorities and activities
- Will engage when budgets are seen.
- Preparing for NACD fly-in.
 - Participants:
 - Amy McKay and Ryan representing WACD
 - SCC participants
 - Linda Lyshall
 - Federal Freez Impacts, importance of Farm Bill
- Met with SCC and NRCS in Spokane last week.
- Recognized that CDs work directly with producers and often can see and identify stresses that affect the ag community. Just something to keep in mind.

Other Topics

- ArcGIS online – Brandy Reed
 - Many expressed interest in shared ArcGIS online subscription
 - This opportunity is changing
 - Andrew Phay is reaching out to CDs
 - Will require everyone to make a decision on how to move forward as Whatcom CD can't manage the new subscriptions as in the past
 - Deadline is in April
 - Important to have a conversation between managers.
 - Ryan Williams reached out to State purchasing – no answers yet, still trying to figure it out.