

Roundtable Notes 8.14.25

Question about AI notetaking feature on Zoom

- If there are any major concerns about declining this ability when requested, please let your regional manager know. We declined for this meeting for the same reason that we don't record meetings, so that people can speak candidly. Just reach out to your regional manager if you would like to talk more.

Welcome/leadership, RGP, VSP – James Thompson

- Busy time, close of the 23-25 biennium, especially for finance team, working through unresolved and final components
 - Please continue to be as responsive as possible, thank you!
- Riparian Grant Program
 - Not certain how much funding will come back from the previous biennium, we know some will come back, just no details on the amount yet.
 - Seeing big projects come in on applications.
 - Slightly more projects than funding being requested, anticipate some changes in the balance of these figures (how much we have vs how much requested), getting close to a final determination.
 - Currently reviewing eligibility and viability, think by the end of next week we will be in the position to start making awards
 - Ongoing discussion about making exceptions beyond the guidelines, would allow for some reimbursement for maintenance and staff time to go back to the first day of the biennium.
 - Big projects taking more time to review. We encourage larger projects, but also recognize they require more time.
 - Looking to hire a dedicated support person for RGP.
- VSP and Ag Viability
 - At Spokane meeting a year or so ago – Dan Wood from Dairy Federation voiced concern about ag viability within VSP. Continuing conversations with James, Dan, and John Stuhlmiller (formerly with Washington Farm Bureau, now at Water Resources Association).
 - There is direct language about this in VSP, but ag viability definition is not clear. Sets up a level of frustration. Asking what ag viability means to others to gain understanding and develop construct. Not looking to

define ag viability, looking at what is important is to support programs and funding.

- **Comment:** Tough issue. When the VSP panel came out to our district, folks on panel don't believe it's required. Spurred debate. Even grappling at the state tech panel level. Pacific CD does report on ag viability, even farm to table events, educational events...needs to be agreed upon by the VSP workgroup.
- VSP meeting last week in Spokane, heard from three CDs, each has different ideas on how to consider and measure ag viability.
- County work groups know how to consider ag viability locally, would like to see them get more resources for their approaches.
- **Comment:** It is complicated, but there are through lines for every county. Support in the legislature. Could do something like the CPPE matrix to measure/score. Every VSP group would have a different version, but that would be okay to keep at the local level, using the local definition. Need to start somewhere. Interested to hear what Dan Wood and John Stuhlmiller think of that.
 - Yes, let's continue having the conversation.
- **Question:** If you can't measure it, how can you evaluate progress?
 - You can measure impacts of individual actions, bmps, measures. Incremental benefits = progress
- Just because it's tough, doesn't mean we shouldn't take it on.
- New tech panel advisory member – farm planner for Salmon Safe, Brian Muegge. Will be brought to the Commission at the September meeting for approval.
- **Comment:** The new Darigold plant is costing all the dairies money and they already have a milk plant in Sunnyside. The Pasco one is for powdered milk processing. So ag viability for them is actually taking a pretty big hit. Especially dairies that have like 500 milk cows vs. 1000 or more.
- Really important to integrate other programs into VSP and take credit for those. We want to keep counties in VSP.

Decision Package Development – Kate Delavan

- At the July Commission meeting, we were authorized to submit three decision packages for the '26 supplemental budget. That authorization is for up to \$2.5M for Forest Health and Community Wildfire Resiliency, up to \$2.25M for CTA, and up to \$3.2M for IT and Data Modernization. Last Friday, Kate emailed district

managers copies of the Forest Health and CTA drafts. We've requested any feedback by August 22 as we'd like to have these final by September 3 so we have some wiggle room to get them in the system before the September 15 deadline.

Quick reminder of how we got to where we are today:

- All-district meeting held on June 12 to discuss budget priorities.
- SCC sent an electronic survey to district managers following the all-district meeting to gather additional feedback, including budget prioritization. Many districts indicated an interest in supporting the development of decision packages, so we are sending them to everyone.
- SCC hosted a budget discussion with district managers on July 1 to share what we have heard and the direction we are headed.
- James shared potential packages and amounts at July CD Roundtable. We also had an early conversation on messaging for Forest Health at that meeting.
- Drafts are not set in stone, we will review typographical edits, looking for pictures on the big picture. Comments will be provided through Formstack.
- IMPORTANT! These DPs are not ready to be shared beyond CDs.
- We will continue editing as we receive more information.

If you'd like to review, here's what we're looking for:

- Are there key messages we're missing?
- Are there factual errors that need to be corrected?
- Are there any red flags?
- What would make the packages stronger?

How to submit your comments:

- Submit your feedback via Formstack ([Decision Packages Feedback Form - Formstack](#)) by **August 22**
- **Comment:** Thank you all for the opportunity to weigh in! I really appreciated it.

- **Comment:** CD's gave forestry need dollars. Had a meeting two days ago with state legislator Walsh, chatted about the forestry budget situation, felt optimistic about getting more funds. Also, I talked with Congresswoman Gluesenkamp Perez about federal level dollars. Think there is an opportunity to do something. Also talked about RGP dollars going to RCO. Think these are places we can dig into more.
- James and Kate met with Dave Upthegrove, talking about upcoming supplemental budget and forest health. DNR putting in HB1168 supplemental budget, want to include CDs on that. Will pass any developments on to everyone.
- **Comment:** Thank you, Kate! We appreciate your efforts to include input from CDs and involve CDs in the process!

Federal funding – Kate Delavan

Senator Murray is looking for information on federal funding that had been promised to Washington state but was pulled back as she is looking to understand if any of these decisions can be reversed. I know there are a couple CDs out there that have had funding pulled. If you have had federal funding revoked, could you send me an email or give me a call to share more detail? Specifically, I am looking to gather:

- What was the funding program/grant?
- What was the amount?
- What was the status of funding (e.g. had it been awarded but not obligated?)
- What was the project going to do?
- What was the reason given the funding was pulled?

Please share with Kate in the next week or so! kdelavan@scc.wa.gov

Comments on federal funding shared in chat:

- PCSRF is on the line right now. It would be great to preserve this as a near-term priority.
- We lost our Equity in Conservation Outreach coop. agreement one year into it. Not everyone lost theirs but ours was terminated.
- Cascadia has one agreement that was under contract for at least a year that has been paused since January. not officially cancelled but no info from NRCS most of the time.

- Palouse: Federal award from EPA terminated – affected many partners as well. Lost AmeriCorps program suddenly, lack of support for programs that have stalled as a result.

Puget Sound Action Agenda – Kate Delavan

- The Puget Sound Partnership released an early draft of the [2026-2030 Puget Sound Action Agenda](#) as part of a partner review with comments due 8/29/25. After this period of review, the Action Agenda will be revised and open for full public comment between January and March 2026.
- SCC has reviewed this draft. Prior to submitting our comments, we'd like to talk to Puget Sound districts to ensure that we are on the right track and haven't missed anything. We shared draft comments via email and we will walk through our comments during the PSCD meeting on August 22. Please don't feel like you need to review the Action Agenda up front to be prepared for this meeting, though there are a couple of sections we suggest you read through.
- Our review focused on ensuring that conservation districts, SCC programs, and voluntary conservation are included appropriately throughout the Action Agenda. In some areas, we address some minor changes to the text. There are two areas where we have broader concerns, including **Riparian** (pages 58-61) and **Stewardship** (page 76-78).
- Look for the email in your inbox or reach out to Kate for more info.
kdelavan@scc.wa.gov

ECY Nonpoint Pollution Plan – Kate Delavan

- Comments are due August 29, see Kate's email from last week for more details
- CDs are mentioned throughout, content sometimes seems accurate, sometimes not
- An email has been sent out with highlighted sections in question
- Piece about NRCS shared with Nick Vera
- Some CDs have reached out, thank you
- **Comment:** Went through this 16-17 years ago. ECY voluntary programs explored in comparison to programs such as SCC/CD's. One comment was that SCC hasn't updated certain items. If this comes up, would encourage SCC to have a meeting and make a statement if still up to date. Would like to see a more even partnership. Will be making comments on the non-point. Many important components to pay attention to that could affect district work.
- **Comment:** Agree with above comments. (x4 in chat)

Thank you from finance and updates - Sarah Groth

- Thank you to every district for the huge lift in getting vouchers submitted in a timely manner, we recognize there is an increased workload with the additional programs, and that it's a quick turnaround. Down to just a handful of vouchers. Hoping to have everything closed out in the next two weeks! Thanks for being so responsive to our questions and requests.
- If you have sent something in and you have not heard back, please reach out to Sarah and let her know.
- Trying to process voucher payments more frequently, but **absolute latest deadline is August 22nd**, bumping up against deadlines with OFM.
- If you have any concerns with close-out and setting up the new biennium, please reach out to Sarah or Courtney

SmartSheets changes (relicensing)

- Dave Hedrick – has had some conversations, found out SmartSheets (SS) was purchased by a venture capital group and some changes are being implemented. Doesn't have anything specific but seems like SS is going to change dramatically and become more expensive.
- **Comment:** We quit Smartsheet because of all of this.
- **Comment:** Worked through this, look at users and how they are classified, the classification of users was a big change. Were able to adjust here and calibrated the subscription fee back to something more reasonable.
- **Comment:** We had paid licenses for almost all of our employees, so we just bought one extra license to get into compliance. But it isn't cheap unfortunately.
- **Comment:** Also reduced number of license holders at our district.
- **Comment:** I have a few power users and then 1 user that everybody else uses

WACD – Heather Wendt

Tom is still out, please contact Ryan or Heather.

Working on the annual conference, bringing in sponsors. Some creative opportunities coming to mind. 😊

Central/Eastern WA survey on plant materials, please fill out and send in.

A lot of committee and resolution work coming up. Area meetings coming up in October! WACD can help you draft resolutions.

Here is the link to the Resolution Table: <https://wadistricts.us/wacd-resolutions/>

Post-Fire Update

- Jenny (jcoe@scc.wa.gov) will be your main contact for post-fire recovery assistance
- SCC does not currently have funds to support post-fire recovery work; however, the FHCWR Program funds can be used for post-fire recovery technical assistance
- In the past, districts have been successful going directly to their legislators to request funding support for post-fire recovery work
- Jenny is developing a needs assessment form that will stay open throughout the season so SCC districts can communicate landowner needs as demand for post-fire recovery assistance grows
 - She will send out an email with a link when it's ready
- Collin Haffey at DNR is the Post-fire recovery program manager and can help you make contacts and connect you to post-fire resources
- Two helpful resources:
 - Okanogan CD's Post-wildfire risk mitigation and assessment training put on a few years ago. Can be accessed through CTD site training library.
 - After the Fire Washington website: afterthefirewa.org – full of post-fire recovery resources for all audiences

MRSC Suggested Guidelines for Purchasing, Bidding and Contracting for CDs – Update:

MRSC is currently reviewing their documents related to contracting and bidding as there have been changes to legislation that affect these documents. This requires that all documents (often a document that pertains to a specific governmental type) with outdated information must be updated. This is a burdensome process and is becoming a more regular occurrence. MRSC is looking at ways to streamline their guidance documents so that updates are simpler and updates do not have to be made to multiple documents every time a change is made. SCC is working with MRSC as to how this may look for the Suggested Guidelines for CDs document in the future without losing those aspects that are unique to CDs.

For now the Suggested Guidelines document will remain available online as it is still a valuable resource in the interim while updates are being determined. That being said, information regarding Limited Public Works and the Small Works Roster in the document is

no longer valid due to legislative changes. MRCS has provided updated guidance. Per MRSC:

“Limited Small Public Works process is no longer available as an option for local government agencies. [RCW 39.04.155](#) which previously authorized Limited Small Public Works via small works roster has been replaced by the small works roster process under [RCW 39.04.151](#) through [39.04.154](#), effective July 1st of 2024.

For reference, current small works roster requirements are provided on our topic page linked here: [MRSC - Competitive Bidding for Small Works Contracts](#)”

There is also a pertinent blog post from MRSC regarding the topic: [MRSC - Small Works Rosters Are Changing: Are You Ready?](#)

Please take note of these changes. Feel free to reach out to MRSC with any questions.

NRI Clarifications

We have heard some confusion about what it means that NRI funds are being “held” until September 30th. Just as a clarification, each district has access to **\$107,770** for NRI projects. These funds are secure for each district until September 30th during which time Addendums are being reviewed as they are submitted and awards are being made. The funds can be held for a longer period as long as the district is working in good faith with their Regional Manager to identify eligible projects.

As a reminder a properly formatted addendum must be submitted and a formal award must be received before any funds can be spent. A sample NRI addendum can be found here: [sample grant addendum](#)

Likewise, any changes to NRI grants after initial awards are made must also be formally amended by working with your RM before any funds are expended related to the changes.

The original NRI announcement can be found [here](#) for reference.

[Additional agenda items](#)

Code of conduct for conflict resolution between districts

- Consider adopting between districts
- Linda Lyshall proposes drafting, would like help, and then bring to the next meeting for consideration.
- **Comment:** We are all our own separate legal entities. If we ever accomplish a Code of Conduct for supervisors, this will help. Difficult to implement between CDs, would need to be at the supervisor level.

- This would be voluntary and a request to join in.
- **Comment:** Code of conduct unfortunately has to do with individuals and their egos. I disagree with the comment of solely for supervisors. Staff and supervisors are individuals with their bias and attitudes. The needs of the natural resources should be the focus.
- **Comment:** What is actually enforceable? Supervisors are responsible for the governance of a CD, not the staff. Agree we all need to operate as professionally as possible.
- **Comment:** Do we need to make it enforceable or are we creating a norm for behavior? Any volunteers to help Linda draft? Can email her.
- **Question:** Isn't code of conduct included in the CAPP and code of ethics of RCW/WAC for public officers
- **Comments:** Boards sometimes don't have experience with conflict. If there is an issue, there needs to be accountability. Not overarching for all supervisors, between adjacent districts, perhaps. Ensure agreements between districts have something included around conflict if it occurs.

CCA Notifications and Tribal Engagement

Local tribe feedback from others with CCA notifications?

- Received some responses and curious if others are receiving similar responses. Requested CR surveys on several properties working on through RGP. Seemed outside of scope of CCA?
- Haven't received these types of responses. Received a reminder to complete cultural resources survey, adding clarifying language to notification letter and email. See below:
 - *Director XXX,*
Please see the attached Climate Commitment Act funded notification letter for a grant Clark Conservation District is applying for through the Washington State Conservation Commission. I am happy to discuss the project with you or your designee if you have any input. Please note that if awarded, we will complete a cultural resource review as indicated for any ground disturbing activity.
Thank you,
- Notifying Tribes that haven't worked with before. Would like more clarity on what is required from the state level.

- Kate has not heard of complete satisfaction from anyone involved with CCA notifications, including Tribes and partners. Various staff could be receiving these notifications, but don't have a role in conservation project work and don't know how to respond. Recognize there is confusion at multiple levels. Needs a lot of work and will require new guidance from the state or a change to the RCW.
- Has anyone received a letter back from DAHP for these CCA notification letters? When I sent the letter I received a response from DAHP that looked like having to take further steps? It was a bit confusing.
 - You are not alone in that, they've added a process step. The statute allows them to, best to go ahead and respond, call me (Jean Fike) if I can help
- Government to government consultation, but also good authentic collaboration, have sat down with cultural resources personnel at Tribes work most with and share upcoming projects.
 - Other local Tribes have reached out for assistance with outreach programs.

Other updates and questions

There is an upcoming TSP Webinar for those who are interested: Introduction to the NRCS Technical Service Provider (TSP) Program

TEAMS Live Webinar

Thursday, August 21, 2025

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM EST/12:00PM – 1:00pm PST [Registration Link](#)

FY26 Training Needs Inventory The [FY26 Training Needs Inventory \(TNI\)](#) is here! This is the place to request your training needs for the coming fiscal year. **NRCS courses MUST be requested here**, but --

- The TNI is not just for planners! Please fill out the TNI no matter your role at your district -- we want to hear from you on the training you need.
- This year, in addition to NRCS courses, we are asking you to identify your top training priorities for this year, future needs, and your training preferences for timing, delivery, and format. Thank you in advance for taking a few minutes to share this extra information so that we can offer the most relevant and effective training opportunities for you.
- ***If you are requesting an NRCS course, your response by Friday, Aug 22*** will be very valuable in advocating for district seats in those courses. However, please feel free to return to the survey throughout the year as new training needs arise.
- Questions or comments? Please email Jan Thomas at training@wactd.org.

Any more information on the WACD Livestock Committee? Brad Riehle said the committee is still active and mostly discussing current topics as they emerge. The WACD president makes appointments. Email Amy McKay about that, Heather will help coordinate.

SFF update from Karen: I've been working through budget clarifications as needed with districts and SFF awards are being prepared and will go out during the second half of August (as previously communicated) with cover crop awards prioritized to go out first. If any districts would like to discuss what to expect by phone, please feel free to contact Karen Hills.

First pull of **Alternative Manure Management** applications is Sept. 2

Karen is tracking the implementation of **dairy anaerobic digester funding** that was moved to Commerce and is happy to share information as it comes out to any district folks who are interested. I will be sharing with the CTD dairy planner group. If interested in being added to the list, please reach out: khills@scc.wa.gov

A couple of SCC communications reminders:

- Biennial report info due Aug. 29 reminder: <https://www.scc.wa.gov/news/biennial-report-resources>

- Sunday district spotlight reminder:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/ca5bada29e7f447a838f127e5e2b3977>

Irrigation Efficiencies Irrigation Efficiencies is accepting applications for General TA, Project Specific TA, and Financial Assistance, at this time. The application link and program information can be **found on our webpage**. Any questions please contact Jon Culp jculp@scc.wa.gov

A **Draft Washington Comprehensive Climate Action Plan** is out for public comment and includes sections on agriculture and natural and working lands. See this **announcement** from Commerce for more context and use the **Public Comment Form** to weigh in by Aug 22.