



Turning Community Needs Into Action



Washington State
Conservation
Commission



CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
OF WASHINGTON STATE

your window to healthy lands

*Using the Planning Process to Connect
Conservation with Real People*

Stu Trefry, SW Washington Regional Manager
Manager, CD Development & Capacity
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It's not just about community,
its about what and who the
community knows!

Locally Led Conservation In Washington, it's the Law!

RCW 89.08.220

Corporate status and powers of district.

A conservation district organized under the provisions of chapter 184, Laws of 1973 1st ex. sess. shall constitute a governmental subdivision of this state, and a public body corporate and politic exercising public powers, but shall not levy taxes or issue bonds and such district, and the supervisors thereof, shall have the following powers, in addition to others granted in other sections of chapter 184, Laws of 1973 1st ex. sess.:

- (1) To conduct surveys, investigations, and research relating to the conservation of renewable natural resources and the preventive and control measures and works of improvement needed, to publish the results of such surveys, investigations, or research, and to disseminate information concerning such preventive and control measures and works of improvement: PROVIDED, That in order to avoid duplication of research activities, no district shall initiate any research program except in cooperation with the government of this state or any of its agencies, or with the United States or any of its agencies;
- (2) To conduct educational and demonstrational projects on any lands within the district upon obtaining the consent of the occupier of such lands and such necessary rights or interests in such lands as may be required in order to demonstrate by example the means, methods, measures, and works of improvement by which the conservation of renewable natural resources may be carried out;
- (3) To carry out preventative and control measures and works of improvement for the conservation of renewable natural resources, within the district including, but not limited to, engineering operations, methods of cultivation, the growing of vegetation, changes in use of lands, and the measures listed in RCW 89.08.010, on any lands within the district upon obtaining the consent of the occupier of such lands or interests in such lands as may be required;
- (4) To cooperate or enter into agreements with, and within the limits of appropriations duly made available to it by law, to furnish financial or other aid to any agency, governmental or otherwise, or any occupier of lands within the district in the carrying on of preventive and control measures and works of improvement for the conservation of renewable natural resources within the district, subject to such conditions as the supervisors may deem necessary to advance the purposes of chapter 184, Laws of 1973 1st ex. sess. For purposes of this subsection only, land occupiers who are also district supervisors are not subject to the provisions of RCW 42.23.030;
- (5) To obtain options upon and to acquire in any manner, except by condemnation, by purchase, exchange, lease, gift, bequest, devise, or otherwise, any property, real or personal, or rights or interests therein; to maintain, administer, and improve any properties acquired, to receive income from such properties and to expend such income in carrying out the purposes and provisions of chapter 184, Laws of 1973 1st ex. sess.; and to sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of any of its property or interests therein in furtherance of the purposes and the provisions of chapter 184, Laws of 1973 1st ex. sess.;
- (6) To make available, on such terms, as it shall prescribe, to land occupiers within the district, agricultural and engineering machinery and equipment, fertilizer, seeds, seedlings, and such other equipment and material as will assist them to carry on operations upon their lands for the conservation of renewable natural resources;
- (7)(a) To prepare and keep current a comprehensive long-range program recommending the conservation of all the renewable natural resources of the district. Such programs shall be directed toward the best use of renewable natural resources and in a manner that will best meet the needs of the district and the state, taking into consideration, where appropriate, such uses as farming, grazing, timber supply, forest, parks, outdoor recreation, potable water supplies for urban and rural areas, water for agriculture, minimal flow, and industrial uses, watershed stabilization, control of soil erosion, retardation of water runoff, flood prevention and control, reservoirs and other water storage, restriction of developments of floodplains, protection of open space and scenery, preservation of natural beauty, protection of fish and wildlife, preservation of wilderness areas and wild rivers, the prevention or reduction of sedimentation and other pollution in rivers and other waters, and such location of highways, schools, housing developments, industries, airports and other facilities and structures as will fit the needs of the state and be consistent with the best uses of the renewable natural resources of the state. The program shall include an inventory of all renewable natural resources in the district, a compilation of current resource needs, projections of future resource requirements, priorities for various resource activities, projected timetables, descriptions of available alternatives, and provisions for coordination with other resource programs.
- (b) The district shall also prepare an annual work plan, which shall describe the action programs, services, facilities, materials, working arrangements and estimated funds needed to carry out the parts of the long-range programs that are of the highest priorities.
- (c) The districts shall hold public hearings at appropriate times in connection with the preparation of programs and plans, shall give careful consideration to the views expressed and problems revealed in hearings, and shall keep the public informed concerning their programs, plans, and activities. Occupiers of land shall be invited to submit proposals for consideration to such hearings. The districts may supplement such hearings with meetings, referenda and other suitable means to determine the wishes of interested parties and the general public in regard to current and proposed plans and programs of a district. They shall confer with public and private agencies, individually and in groups, to give and obtain information and understanding of the impact of district operations upon agriculture, forestry, water supply and quality, flood control, particular industries, commercial concerns and other public and private interests, both rural and urban.
- (d) Each district shall submit to the commission its proposed long-range program and annual work plans for review and comment.
- (e) The long-range renewable natural resource program, together with the supplemental annual work plans, developed by each district under the foregoing procedures shall have official status as the authorized program of the district, and it shall be published by the districts as its "renewable resources program". Copies shall be made available by the districts to the appropriate counties, municipalities, special purpose districts and state agencies, and shall be made available in convenient places for examination by public land occupier or private interest concerned. Summaries of the program and selected material therefrom shall be distributed as widely as feasible for public information;
- (8) To administer any project or program concerned with the conservation of renewable natural resources located within its boundaries undertaken by any federal, state, or other public agency by entering into a contract or other appropriate administrative arrangement with any agency administering such project or program;
- (9) Cooperate with other districts organized under chapter 184, Laws of 1973 1st ex. sess. in the exercise of any of its powers;
- (10) To accept donations, gifts, and contributions in money, services, materials, or otherwise, from the United States or any of its agencies, from this state or any of its agencies, or from any other source, and to use or expend such moneys, services, materials, or any contributions in carrying out the purposes of chapter 184, Laws of 1973 1st ex. sess.;
- (11) To sue and be sued in the name of the district; to have a seal which shall be judicially noticed; have perpetual succession unless terminated as hereinafter provided; to make and execute contracts and other instruments, necessary or convenient to the exercise of its powers; to borrow money and to pledge, mortgage and assign the income of the district and its real or personal property therefor; and to make, amend rules and regulations not inconsistent with chapter 184, Laws of 1973 1st ex. sess. and to carry into effect its purposes;
- (12)(a) Any two or more districts may engage in joint activities by agreement between or among them including, but not limited to, planning, financing, engineering, constructing, operating, maintaining, and administering any program or project concerned with the conservation of renewable natural resources. The districts concerned may make available for purposes of the agreement any funds, property, personnel, professional engineering, equipment, or services available to them under chapter 184, Laws of 1973 1st ex. sess.
- (b) Any district may enter into such agreements with a district or districts in adjoining states to carry out such purposes if the law in such other states permits the districts in such states to enter into such agreements.
- (c) The commission shall have authority to propose, guide, and facilitate the establishment and carrying out of any such agreement;
- (13) Every district shall, through public hearings, annual meetings, publications, or other means, keep the general public, agencies and occupiers of land within the district, informed of the works and activities planned and administered by the district, of the purposes these will serve, of the income and expenditures of the district, of the funds borrowed by the district and the purposes for which such funds are expended, and of the results achieved annually by the district; and
- (14) The supervisors of conservation districts may designate an area, state, and national association of conservation districts as a coordinating agency in the execution of the duties imposed by this chapter, and to make gifts in the form of dues, quotas, or otherwise to such associations for costs of services rendered, and may support and attend such meetings as may be required to promote and perfect the organization and to effect its purposes.

[2019 c 103 § 1, 1999 c 305 § 8, 1973 1st ex. s. c 184 § 23, 1963 c 110 § 1, 1961 c 240 § 13, 1955 c 304 § 22. Prior: (i) 1939 c 187 § 8; RRS § 10726-8. (ii) 1939 c 187 § 13; RRS § 10726-13]



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- [RCW 89.08.220\(7\)](#)
- Hold public hearings at appropriate times in connection with the preparation of programs and plans; give careful consideration to the views expressed and problems revealed;
- Keep the public informed concerning their programs, plans, and activities;
- Invite proposals for consideration;
- ***Use meetings, referenda and other suitable means to determine the wishes of interested parties and the general public in regard to current and proposed plans and programs of a district;***
- Confer with public and private agencies...to give and obtain information and understanding of the impact of district operations upon agriculture, forestry, water supply and quality, flood control, particular industries, commercial concerns and other public and private interests, both rural and urban.

Most state conservation district powers and duties statutes have something like...

“(6) To develop comprehensive plans for the control and prevention of soil erosion and for flood prevention or the conservation, development, and utilization of soil and water resources and the disposal of water within the district. These plans shall specify in such detail as may be possible, the acts, procedures, performances, and avoidances which are necessary or desirable for the effectuation of such plans, including the specification of engineering operations, methods of cultivation, the growing of vegetation, cropping programs, tillage practices, and changes in use of land, and to bring such plans and information to the attention of owners of lands within the district;”

**...with no, or very little, mention of
community outreach!**


What do we mean by 'Community'?

com·mu·ni·ty

kə'myoōnədē/

noun: community; plural noun: communities

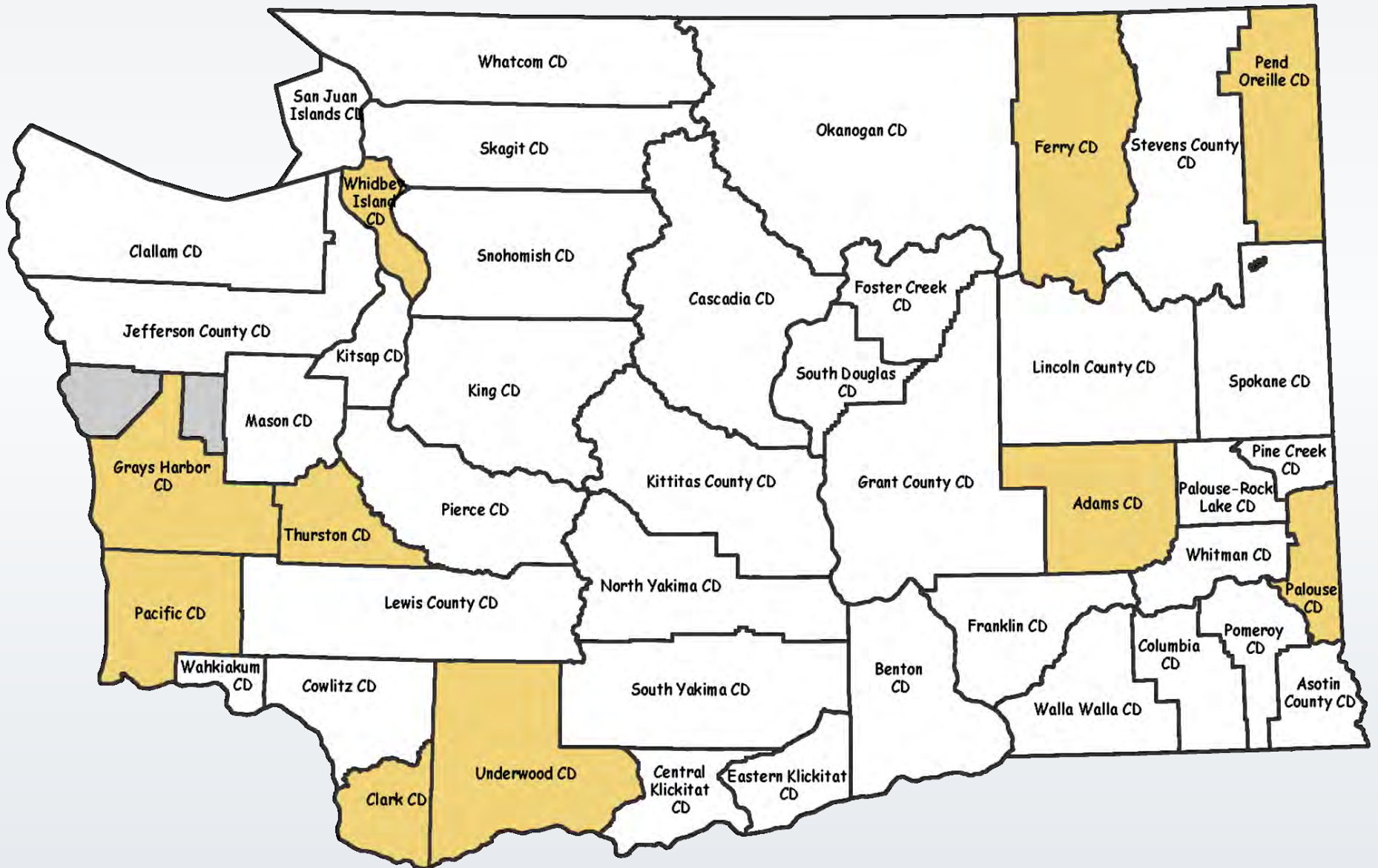
1. A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.
2. A feeling of fellowship with others as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals.
3. A group of interdependent organisms of different species growing or living together in a specified habitat.



Communities can provide a greater understanding of your local history, culture, science, data!

They may also provide community support in the form of political and financial backing!

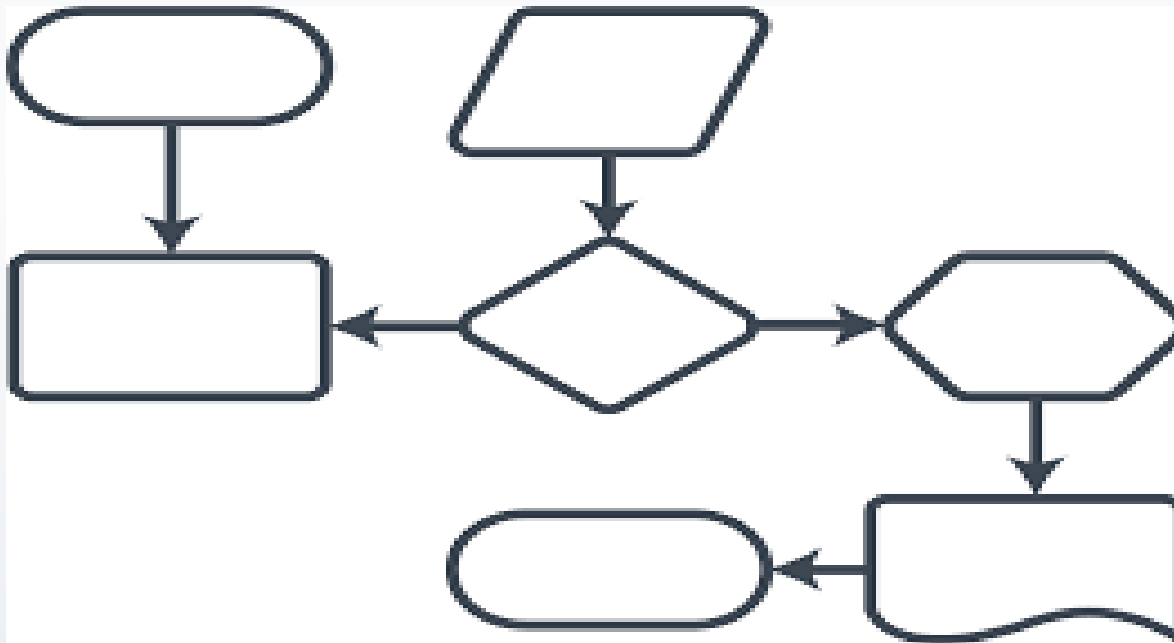
Every District is Different!



But Regardless of the district...

- Local people care about the natural resources of their district;
- There are resource concerns that need to be addressed;
- There is data describing the condition of natural resources;
- **Every** district in Washington must adopt 5-year and annual plans of work!

So, what's the process?



Model Process for Development of District 5–Year Plans

Be thoughtful; take your time; 6 months or so is ideal...

- **Month 1:** One or more community meetings
- **Months 2 & 3:** Two planning meetings separate from the distractions of a regular board meeting
- **Months 4 & 5:** Send DRAFT plan out for public comment (45 days); hold at least one public hearing either part of a board meeting or separately.
- **Month 6:** Adopt final 5-year plan!

Model Session Design for Community Meetings *(no more than 2 hours!)*

1. Opening comments from a board member.
2. Everyone introduces themselves:
 - *Name. Occupation. What inspired them to attend?*
3. Review function, powers, & authorities of districts.
4. Ask district to present data on district natural resources.
5. Reflect community vision/values by asking:
 - *In 5 years, what would you use to describe the district?*
 - *What will be the greatest accomplishment of the district?*
6. Get a sense of community thoughts on natural resource concerns:
 - *If there were only so much money, energy, and time available, what natural resource concerns would you address?*
7. Sweep the corners of participants' brains by asking:
 - *If you were ruler for a day, what would you want the district board to concentrate on as they develop their long range plan?*
8. Adjourn

An aerial photograph of a coastal region, likely Whidbey Island, showing a complex network of dark blue waterways and inlets cutting through green, vegetated land. The water appears deep and calm, reflecting the sky. The land is covered in dense green trees and shrubs, with some lighter patches of grass or cleared areas. The overall scene is a mix of natural beauty and geographical complexity.

EXAMPLE – WHIDBEY ISLAND CD COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Three well-attended meetings;
Huge jump-start for the board setting
a vision, developing priorities & goals!



Takeaway #1:

- Board members and staff own the plan!



Takeaway #2:

- The Community owns the plan!



Thank you!

Contact:

Stu Trefry

SW WA Regional Manager

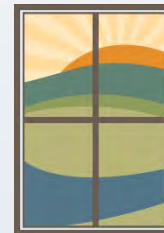
Manager, CD Development & Capacity

strefry@scc.wa.gov

360.584.5213



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