

“We do good things, give us money”



Reporting conservation district accomplishments

Laura Johnson, Communications Coordinator

Field Staff Sharing Session, NASCA 2019



CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
OF WASHINGTON STATE

your window to healthy lands



 *...seriously?*

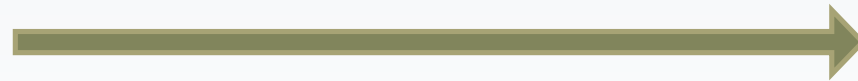


Legislature to SCC:
“Create annual report”

Washington State



**Conservation
Commission**



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**Conservation
Commission**

- 100+ pages
- Covered everything for everyone
- Narrative

Accomplishments

The focus of the Commission is to distribute as much funding as possible to the conservation districts for their projects. The agency is pleased to have kept the commission overhead rate at 15% or less. This has been achieved by implementing several efficiency measures, such as:

- Efficiency measures were investigated, implemented and continue to be practiced today. These include, conference calls, travel, printing and contracts.
- There were several joint meetings held between the Regional Managers and Financial Staff to coordinate issues, address concerns, plan trainings and discuss service improvements. Weekly meetings are currently held to continue process improvements and information sharing.

Over the past year, SCC staff have implemented alternative communication tools. These have allowed for a reduction in travel and overall meeting costs. Webinar technologies have been utilized extensively and are extremely well received by our constituents.

During 2010, Administrative staff either assisted with or reported the following:

- 51,051 miles traveled by the 4 assigned state vehicles
- 152 travel reimbursement requests were authorized
- 6 regular and 2 special Commission meetings were held
- 2 Office of Farmland Preservation meetings were held
- 4 all-staff meetings were held

Administration

Administrative staff provide several critical functions for the agency including:

- Primary contact for the agency
- Office Coordination – supplies, materials, building contact
- District Directory maintenance
- Commute Trip Reduction Coordinator
- Safety and Transportation officer
- Combined Fund Drive Coordinator
- Weekly distribution of information to Commissioners
- Staff Notes distributed to all Supervisors following SCC meeting
- Staff assistance to Regional Managers
- Coordination of reports and presentations
- Travel arrangements for Commissioners and staff
- Authorizing travel reimbursements and compensation
- Planning and Meeting preparation for SCC Meetings
- Assistance for Conservation District Supervisor Election and Appointments with document receipt and processing
- Research and monitor potential funding opportunities
- Prepare and submit Sustainability report
- Record Retention
- Inventory control and surplus
- Award and Recognition coordination for conservation district supervisors and staff
- Develop and publish agency annual report
- Develop and distribute agency outreach and education material
- Ensuring agency compliance with Governor Directives and Executive Orders

OUR PROGRAMS

The SCC offers a suite of financial and technical assistance programs that conservation districts use to implement on-the-ground conservation work:

SCC Grant Programs

- *Capital Cost-Share Investment:* Provides grants for capital projects that result in long-term conservation investment, boost the local economy, and create jobs within each conservation district. In FY 13, the legislature appropriated \$5 million to the SCC to create natural resource jobs. As a result, 451 jobs were created.
- *Implementation:* Funds a range of conservation district priorities, including general operations, district elections, and implementation of cost-share programs with local landowners. Cost-share programs funded through this grant are used to implement best management practices listed in the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Office Technical Guide for Washington State.
- *Livestock Technical Assistance:* Funds technicians at the conservation district-level who work with livestock owners to develop, implement, and update their farm plans to better control soil, water, air, plants, and animals at their facility. The majority of this work is done on facilities with less than 50 acres and less than 100 animals, which can include cattle, horses, pigs, sheep, llamas, and others. It takes technicians an average of six gate visits with the farmer or producer to complete each farm plan.
- *Professional Engineering:* “Clusters” of conservation districts who have similar natural resource issues apply for funding to hire and share the services of a professional engineer. Engineers provide oversight to district planners and technicians and help implement a variety of projects, including fish passage improvement, stream bank stabilization, and low impact development (LID) practices. The SCC currently funds 12 engineers who cover 9 “clusters” that represent all 45 conservation districts.

(continued on next page)



Washington State



**Conservation
Commission**

SCC to CDs:
“Write, format, and email us
an annual success story”



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- Inconsistent format / content
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- Narrative

Warden Conservation District



State Legislative District #13
Congressional District #4, 5

Other Accomplishments



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Provide cost share for Polyacrylimide (PAM) to minimize soil erosion from irrigation practices.

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Fencing Project Promotes Clean Water While Eliminating Bank Erosion.

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Key Partners, WCD, Wa. St. Conservation Commission. Two temporary jobs created.



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More Work To Do

- Two Category 3 projects planned pending funding. Both for commercial dairies. \$80K requested.
- Work with farmers & citizen groups & provide cost share for conservation projects.
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- Expand Grant PUD on IWM & energy efficiencies programs.
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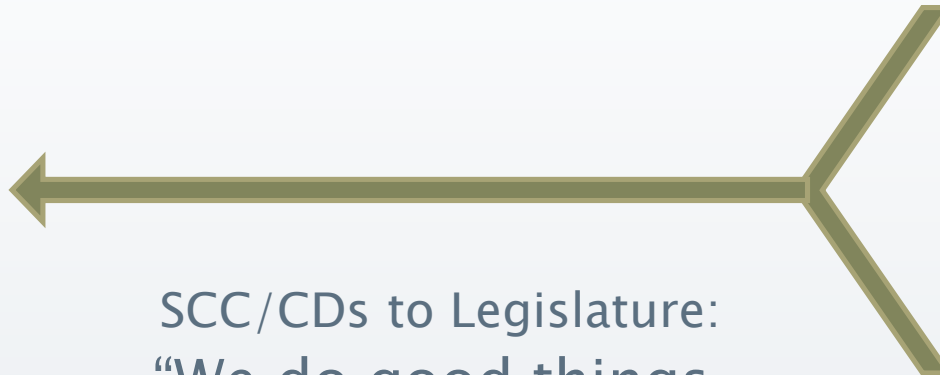
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SCC/CDs to Legislature:
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- No way to demonstrate worth “at a glance”



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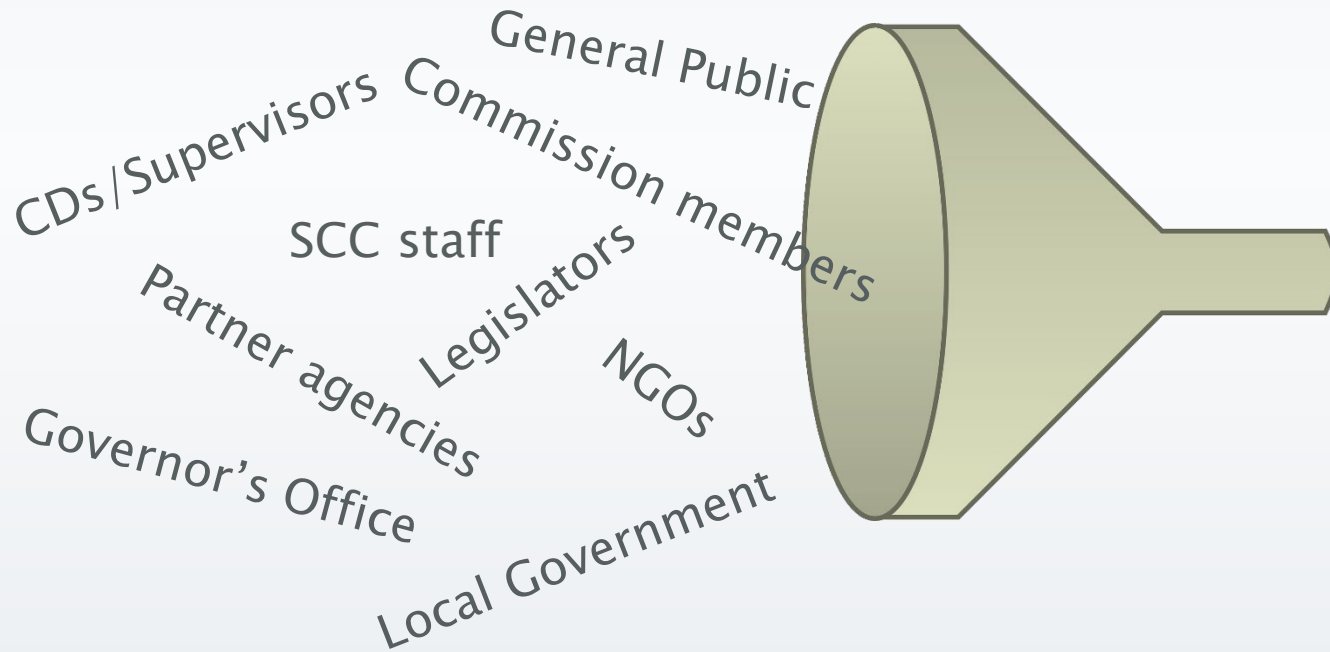
your window to healthy lands

Annual Report

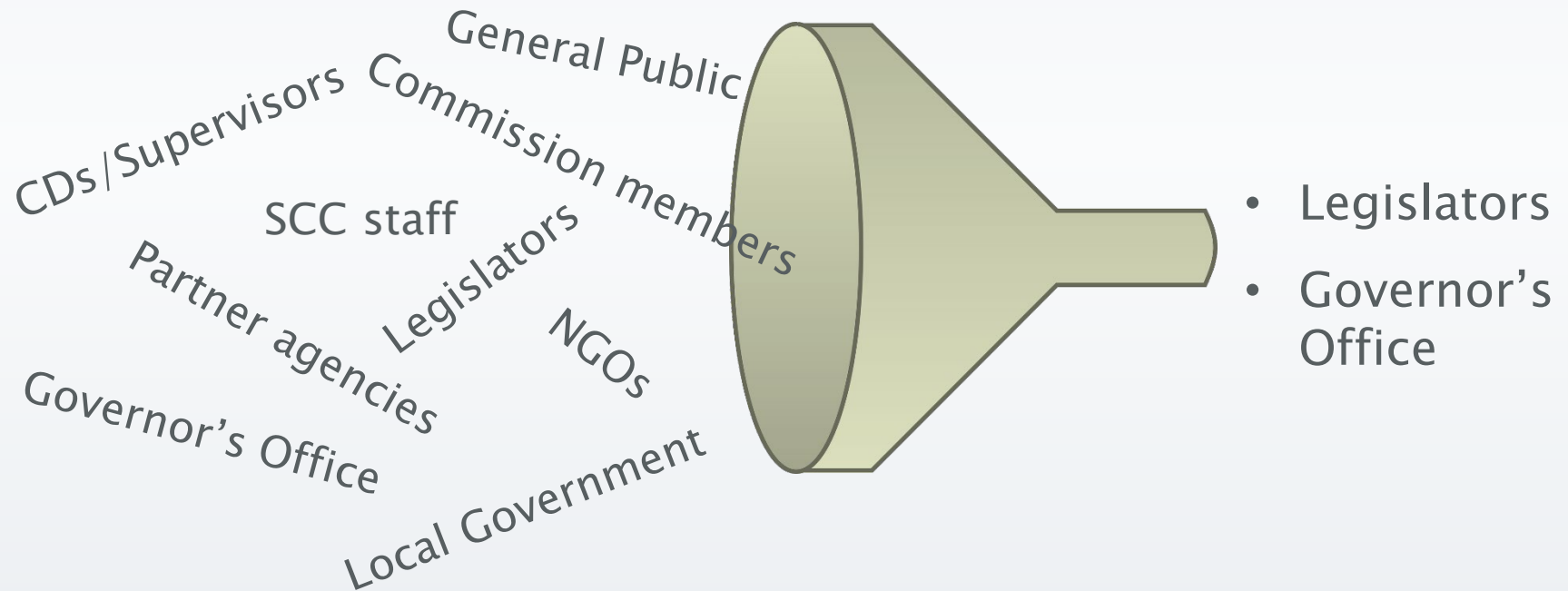


First step: Define primary audience

First step: Define primary audience



First step: Define primary audience



What we know about our audience...

What we know about our audience...



Limited time
=
Visuals better than
narrative

What we know about our audience...



Want to know they're making
smart, defensible
investments

=

Need to clearly measure and
show what they're "buying"

What we know about our audience...



Some have little to no
knowledge of “BMPs”

=

Need to provide examples

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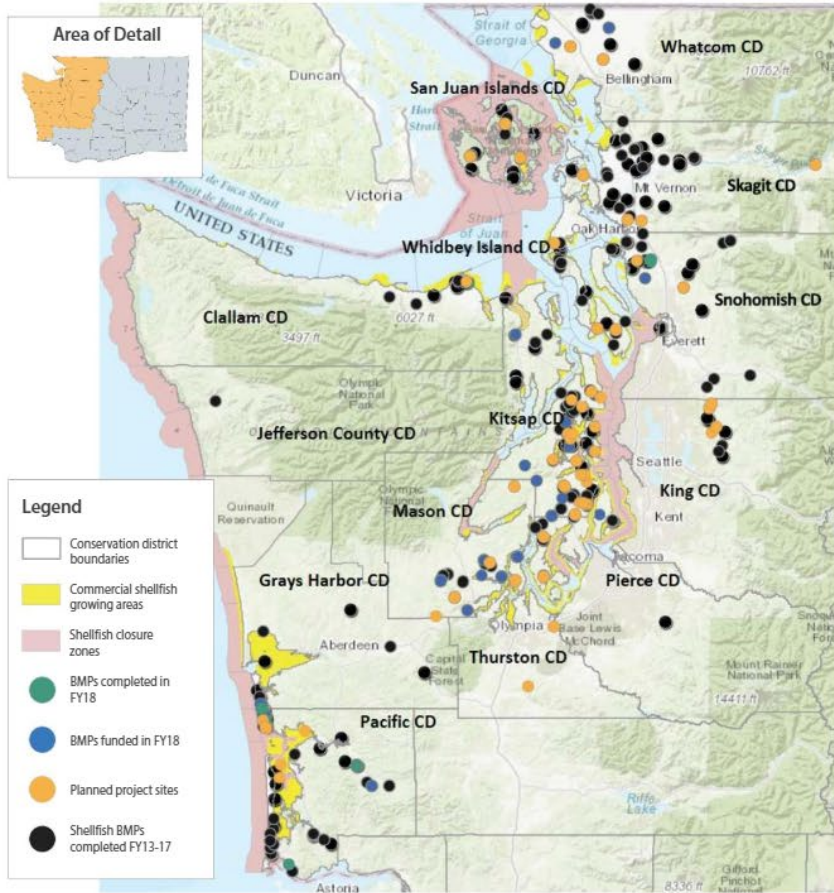
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Shellfish Program

2017-19 Funding: \$4,000,000

Our Shellfish Program uses a targeted approach to invest in best management practices (BMPs) installed by conservation districts and landowners that build cumulative results for shellfish recovery. Priority is given to "project clusters" within a watershed or stream reach where there's a water quality concern.



Examples of BMPs eligible for Shellfish funding



Waste storage facilities: Storing manure in a covered structure on a non-erodible surface reduces the potential of polluting surface and groundwater.



On-site septic system repair or replacement: Failing septic systems have proven to be a significant source of water pollution in some shellfish growing areas.



Chemigation units: This upgrades irrigation systems to allow for more efficient application of chemicals to cranberry bogs and reduces runoff to shellfish growing areas.

FY 2018 Highlights

Examples of what will be accomplished through projects funded by Shellfish dollars this year:



128

best management practices installed



271

acres planted and/or treated for weed control



11,651

feet of fencing constructed

Conservation districts have used Shellfish Program funding for projects that were part of efforts that resulted in the upgrade of thousands of acres of shellfish growing areas in Dungeness Bay, Birch Bay, and Drayton Harbor.

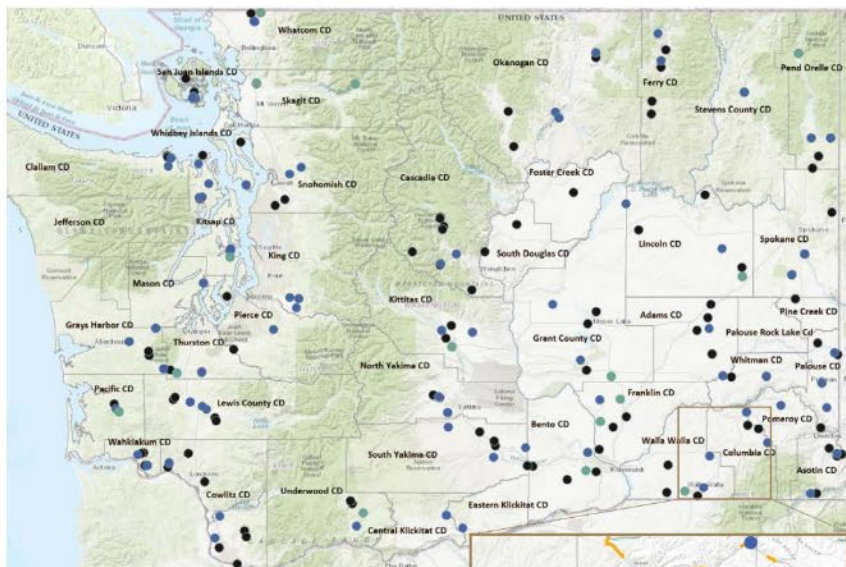
Learn more about the Shellfish Program: scc.wa.gov/shellfish

FY 2018 PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Natural Resource Investments (NRI)

2017-19 Funding: \$4,000,000

Conservation districts use NRI funding to offer local cost share programs as an incentive for landowners to install best management practices (BMPs). BMPs advance progress toward natural resource objectives, such as improved water quality and habitat, and are farm-friendly.



Legend

- Conservation district boundaries
- BMPs completed in FY18
- BMPs in progress in FY18
- BMPs completed in 15-17
- Impaired waters / TMDL list (see inset map at right)

NRI projects are strategically located to address resource concerns. For example, many water quality projects are located along water bodies where pollutants exceed the Total Maximum Daily Load (see inset map).

Examples of BMPs eligible for NRI funding



Fencing and livestock exclusion: This helps prevent animals from accessing streams and other critical areas and can improve pasture quality.



Livestock feeding pads and heavy use areas: Installing stable, non-eroding surfaces in areas frequently used by animals prevents erosion and aids in manure collection. This helps protect water and air quality.



Instream and streambank stabilization structures: Benefits include erosion control and enhanced fish habitat.

FY 2018 Highlights

Examples of what will be accomplished through projects funded by NRI dollars this year:



195
best management practices installed



16,559
trees and shrubs planted



9,390
feet of fencing constructed

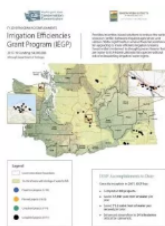


1,449
feet of riparian forest planted

Learn more about NRI:
scc.wa.gov/nri

Fact Sheets

Want to learn more about our conservation work? The following printable fact sheets describe how the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) and conservation districts are turning state investment in natural resource protection into action on the ground.



Irrigation Efficiencies Grant Program (IEGP) – FY 2018

Accomplishments: Project map and summary of accomplishments made through IEGP in fiscal year 2018 and since its inception.

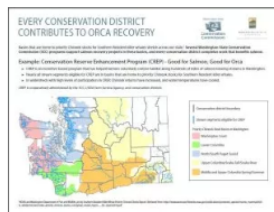
Updated: Jan. 2019



Natural Resource Investments – FY 2018 Accomplishments:

Project map, photos, and metrics highlighting accomplishments made through the Natural Resource Investments Program in state fiscal year 2018.

Updated: Jan. 2019



Orca Recovery: Using the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) as an example, this 11x8.5 fact sheet shows how conservation districts across the state contribute to orca and salmon recovery. It includes a map of priority Chinook stock basins for Southern Resident killer whales, which stretch across Washington.



Shellfish Program – FY 2018 Accomplishments: Project map, photos, and metrics highlighting accomplishments made through the Shellfish Program in state fiscal year 2018.

Updated: Jan. 2019

FY 2018 PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Irrigation Efficiencies Grant Program (IEGP)

2017-19 Funding: \$4,000,000
(through Department of Ecology)

Provides incentive-based solutions to reduce the water resource conflict between irrigated agriculture and salmon. Water right holders receive financial assistance for upgrading to more efficient irrigation systems. Saved water is returned to drought-prone streams that are home to ESA-listed salmonid fish species without risk of relinquishing irrigators' water rights.



Legend

- Conservation district boundaries
- 16 critical basins with shortage of water for fish
- Projects in progress (17-18)
- Planned projects (19-20)
- Completed projects (FY18)
- Completed projects (02-17)

IEGP Accomplishments to Date:

- Since its inception in 2001, IEGP has:
- ▶ Completed **69 projects**.
 - ▶ Saved **17,847 acre feet of water** per year.
 - ▶ Saved **71.2 cubic feet of water per second** per year.
 - ▶ Enhanced streamflow in **24 tributaries** critical for salmonids.

Examples of BMPs eligible for IEGP funding



Fish screens: These are required on IEGP projects. They protect juvenile fish from water diversions, such as irrigation pump intakes.



Center pivot systems: These are one of the most efficient and effective irrigation system types. They offer multiple benefits including saving water, energy, and time.



Soil moisture data collection: This is an important part of each on-farm efficiencies project.

It helps the farmer know how much water to apply and when.

FY 2018 Highlights

Examples of what was accomplished through the IEGP this fiscal year:



Completed two ditch-to-pipe projects that saved 2.2 cubic feet per second of water and returned 620 acre feet of water per year to the Dungeness River.



Participated on Drought Contingency Planning Taskforce, which included completing the final phase of rewriting the state's drought contingency plan.



Helped the Union Gap Irrigation District begin construction on a mitigation project to address impacts to an irrigation pipe that carries water through the Rattlesnake Ridge landslide area.

Learn more about IEGP:
scc.wa.gov/iegp

Contact: Jon Culp, Water Resources Program Manager | jculp@scc.wa.gov | 509-385-7509

Second step:
Improve
process /
product for
CDs

Second step: Improve process / product for CDs

2019 Feature Accomplishment:

Please describe one project or activity that your district launched, implemented, or completed within fiscal year 2019 (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019).

Note: Character counts include spaces. Our primary audience (elected officials) prefers strong project photos accompanied by concise text. Thanks for your patience!

FEATURE PROJECT TITLE (55 characters, including spaces)*

55/55

RESOURCE CHALLENGE (500 characters, including spaces): What resource challenge was occurring, and what/who did it impact? How did your CD get involved? Please avoid technical jargon and excessive acronyms.*

500/500

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS (600 characters, including spaces): How did you address the challenge? How did your services meet natural resource and land use needs? What measurable / observable results occurred or are expected? If possible, include a quote from a project cooperator.*

600/600

Best practice tips

1. Imagine your audience.

The primary audience is **elected officials** (local, state, and federal) and **partners** (agencies, tribes, and NGOs). Think about elected officials and partners from your area, and pick a feature accomplishment that's most important for them to know.

2. Use friendly, familiar language.

The report is written for a **non-technical audience**. Assume readers know little about natural resources or agriculture.

Key tips:

- Avoid jargon, technical language, and unnecessary acronyms.
- Use terms like "fish habitat" or "flood control" instead of technical practice names (e.g. large woody debris/LWD, debris jam, bar apex jam, rootwad tree structures).
- Don't say a stream is on the 303 (d) list. Instead, say something like, "pollution in Rolling Creek exceeds clean water standards," or "Rolling Creek is on the list of polluted waters in our state."
- Say "streamside area" instead of riparian.
- Say "farms and ranches" instead of "ag land."

These are just some examples. Check out this [Language of Conservation: Recommendations on How to Communicate Effectively to Build Support for Conservation](#) (*Public Opinion Strategies*) for more guidance.

3. Tell a story (not an account).

Instead of writing a chronological list of activities or practices that occurred, **employ story elements** to tell your feature accomplishment. Clearly introduce the problem or conflict. Present your cooperating landowner(s) or land use/natural resource issue as the protagonist – someone or something the audience will root for. Present your conservation district as the resolution to the story.

4. Use photos that amplify your story.

Examples of photos to use:

- In many cases, **before and after photos** of a project site provide visual impact at-a-glance.
- Pictures of **cooperator(s) or beneficiaries** of your services show human impacts of your work. (remember to have them sign an [Appearance Release Form](#).)
- **Action shots** of workers during project construction.

Examples of photos to avoid:

- Images with small text (e.g. maps, detailed graphs, slides) that are too small to read when scaled to fit on your page.
- "Backs of heads" (e.g. conference or workshop photos taken from the back of the room).
- Stock images.

5. Remember the goldfish.

A research study claims that the human attention span is just eight seconds — that's less than a goldfish. Stories need to be **quick, engaging, and relatable**. If you follow the four best practices listed above, you're well on your way to achieving this final best practice!

Warden Conservation District



State Legislative District #13
Congressional District #4, 5

Other Accomplishments



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Jefferson County Conservation District

360-385-4105 | info@jeffersoncd.org | www.jeffersoncd.org
Legislative District: 24 Congressional District: 6

Other Accomplishments



Manure management system for a cattle operation improving water quality in Quilcene Bay



Stormwater management and livestock watering tank for a sheep operation improving water quality in Discovery Bay



Part of the 5,000 feet of fencing installed on a cattle ranch to improve water quality on two salmon-bearing streams.

2019 FEATURE ACCOMPLISHMENT

Fish Passage Barrier Removal on Naylor's Creek

Resource Challenge

A small culvert under a private road was preventing salmon from returning to spawning grounds on Naylor's Creek. Jefferson County Conservation District gained the property owner's approval to replace the culvert with a bridge.

Project Summary and Results

Jefferson County Conservation District secured funding to purchase and install a 40-foot bridge and contracted with a small Olympic Peninsula construction firm to make the improvements.

Because of the improved salmon habitat value on Naylor's Creek, Jefferson County Department of Public Works was awarded \$200,000 for the removal of three fish barriers upstream of the project. When complete, this will create two and a half miles of barrier-free, high-value salmon habitat.

Key Partners

Washington State Conservation Commission; Recreation and Conservation Office's Family Forest Fish Passage Program



Naylor's Creek fish passage barrier before (left) and after removal (right).

Priorities for 2020...

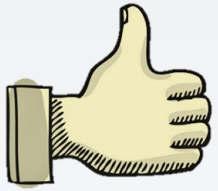
- ▶ Provide livestock technical assistance to a backlog of customers referred by county agencies and non-governmental organizations.
- ▶ Install two working buffers on Chimacum Creek.
- ▶ Assist agriculture producers with drought resiliency improvements through cost share and other funding sources.

Third step: Re-evaluate

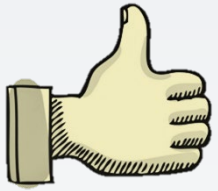
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We are here

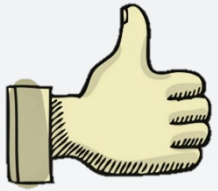


Pros:



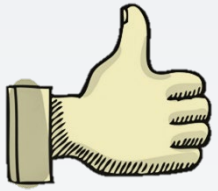
Pros:

- Multiple uses (including to help our “we do good things, give us money” argument)



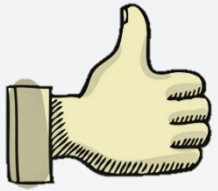
Pros:

- Less pages, less words, less cost



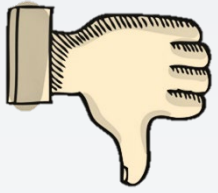
Pros:

- Storybank!!!

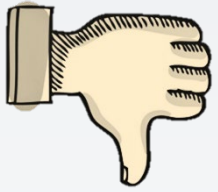


Pros:

- Provides more value to CDs

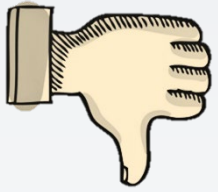


Cons:



Cons:

- OMG, it takes time



Cons:

- OMG, it's still really long

Potential route for re-eval...

Potential route for re-eval...



Meeting with legislative staffers – what do you want to see and how?



Thank you!

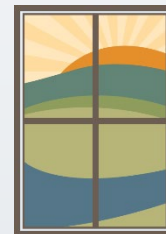
Questions? Ideas?

Laura Johnson

Communications Coordinator

ljohnson@scc.wa.gov

360-407-6936



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your window to healthy lands