

**GWMA
Regulatory Work Group
Study Session Three
Conservation Districts**


South Yakima
Conservation District
Laurie Crowe

June 2015

**CONSERVATION DISTRICTS'
HISTORY & ORIGINS**

1930's


- ↓ *Dust Bowl* - Severe and sustained droughts (1930-31, 1934, 1936, 1939-40) in the Great Plains region created huge black dust storms (*Black Blizzards*) which traveled across the nation.



- ↓ While testifying on Capitol Hill about the soil erosion problem, soil scientist *Hugh Hammond Bennett*, opened the curtains to see a sky blackened by dust.

**CONSERVATION DISTRICTS'
HISTORY & ORIGINS**

1930's



- ↓ In 1933 The Soil Conservation Service was set up on a temporary basis.
- ↓ Ten Regional experiment stations were set up to find methods to control & prevent soil and water losses.
- ↓ Congress established the Soil Conservation Service in 1935.

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS' HISTORY & ORIGINS

1930's

↓ In 1935 Congress also passed legislation declaring *soil and water conservation a national policy and priority.*

↓ In 1937, President Roosevelt recommended legislation for all states allowing local landowners to form soil conservation districts.



CONSERVATION DISTRICTS' HISTORY & ORIGINS

↓ In 1939 Washington State Legislature created Chapter 89.08 of the Revised Code of Washington.

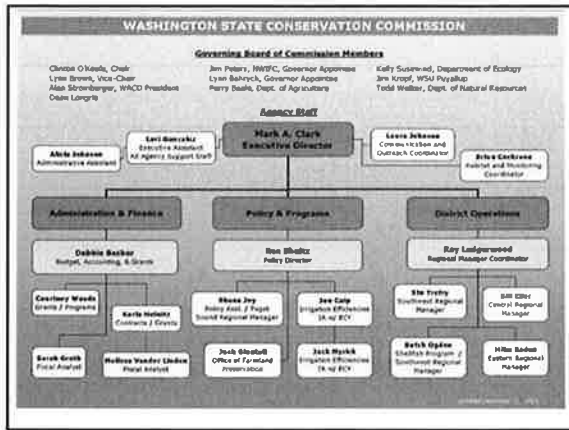
↓ RCW 89.08 created the Washington Conservation Commission and provided for the development and dissolution of conservation districts.

↓ RCW 89.08 explains the duties, responsibilities and powers of the Commission, conservation districts and district supervisors.

Washington State Conservation Commission

↓ The Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) board has ten members.

↓ Four elected from conservation districts, four appointed to represent state agencies, and two appointed by the Governor.



Washington State Conservation Commission

General Duties – RCW 89.08.070

- Coordinate and assist conservation districts with programs, administrative procedures, operations, elections, and accountability systems.
- Support conservation districts through financial and technical assistance; administrative and operational oversight; program coordination; and promotion of district activities and services.
- Review district budgets, require annual reports, conduct conferences, training sessions and seminars.

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

- 04/15/1944 – Rosa CD (merge with Lower Yakima Valley 2/20/1961)
- 02/24/1947 – Lower Yakima Valley CD
- 11/21/1949 – Wapato CD (Changed name to Toppenish CD 05/05/1967)
- 09/19/1974 – Lower Yakima Valley and Toppenish merged into South Yakima CD



WHAT ARE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

DISTRICTS ...

- ↓ **Local governmental subdivision of the state. We are not a state agency nor are we part of county government.**
- ↓ **Conservation districts are a unique form of non-regulatory government. Districts do not enforce compliance or impose penalties.**

WHAT ARE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

DISTRICTS ...

- ↓ **Governed by five local individuals who live and work in their local community and establish local priorities. They volunteer their time without pay.**
- ↓ **Match local needs with technical and financial resources to help landowners within their district boundaries solve on-the-ground natural resource concerns.**

WHAT ARE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

DISTRICTS ...

↓ Work in partnership with local, state, and federal agencies, and private and professional organizations.



↓ Serve as a buffer between landowners and regulatory agencies to prevent and solve problems.

WHAT ARE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

DISTRICTS ...

↓ Conservation districts are funded through public and private grants, special assessments, and contributions and partnerships.



↓ Do not receive an ongoing operating budget from the state General Fund, as most state agencies do.

WHAT ARE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

DISTRICTS ...

↓ Implement conservation practices to reduce soil erosion, conserve water, prevent pollution and runoff, and enhance natural resources.

↓ District programs provide “cost-share” incentives to landowners who plan and implement conservation practices on their land.

WHAT ARE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

DISTRICTS ...

- ↓ Financial assistance, "Cost Share," reimburses landowners for expenses incurred to implement best management practices.
- ↓ "Cost Share" frequently covers from 10% to 75% of the landowner's cost to implement a best management practice.

DAIRY NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLAN (DNMP)

- ↓ Dairy Nutrient Management Act was passed in February 1998 (Formerly: Dairy Waste Management) **RCW 90.64**
- ↓ Dairy Plan Technical Advisory Committee was formed in April of 1998 to develop recommended minimum elements to be in all dairy nutrient management plans per section 6(2) of the Dairy Nutrient Management Act of 1998 (SSB 6161)



DAIRY NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLAN (DNMP)




- RCW 90.64.070**
- ↓ Provide technical assistance to dairy producers in developing and implementing a DNMP.
- ↓ Review, approve, and certify dairy nutrient management plans to ensure that they meet the minimum elements necessary to implement the plan .

DAIRY NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLAN (DNMP)

RCW 90.64.070


- Provide technical assistance to the department in identifying and correcting existing water quality problems resulting from the inspection program.
- Encourage communication and cooperation between the conservation district personnel and local WSDOA personnel.




DAIRY NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLAN (DNMP)

RCW 90.64.070

- Immediately refer complaints received from the public regarding discharge of pollutants to the department.
- Local conservation district employees may, at their discretion, accompany department inspectors on any scheduled inspection of dairy farms except random, unannounced inspections.





The purpose of local conservation districts has remained the same. The law clearly identifies the need to conserve all renewable natural resources through the voluntary actions of Washington's residents.

When the land does well for its owner, and the owner does well by his land—when both end up better by reason of their partnership—then we have conservation - Aldo Leopold

QUESTIONS

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