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**WASHINGTON STATE  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**SEPTEMBER 2006**

**SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES PLAN**



**AGENCY NUMBER 471  
CONTACT: MARY ANDERSON  
MARA461@ECY.WA.GOV  
PO Box 47721  
OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON 98504-7721  
360.407.6202**

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# SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES PLAN

## WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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The Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC), Agency Number 471 is located at the Ecology Headquarters Building at 300 Desmond Drive SE, Lacey, WA 98503. Our mailing address is PO Box 47721, Olympia, WA 98504-7721. Mary Anderson is the agency contact. Phone: 360.407.6202. Email: [mara461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:mara461@ecy.wa.gov).

WSCC is the administrative and coordinating body for the State's 47 conservation districts, providing fiscal, technical, and program assistance, as well as funding support, to the conservation districts to carry out local projects. The Commission represents the local conservation district perspective within state government functions.

We are an independent agency of state government formed in 1939 under RCW 89.08. Commission staff work for the Commission directly. The Commission meets at least six times a year at various locations across the state. The Commission consists of ten members drawn from state agencies, stakeholder community, and two are appointed by the Governor. There are sixteen staff members that provide guidance and oversight to the 47 Conservation Districts comprised of 240 locally elected and appointed conservation district supervisors and 294 district employees. This provides a unique and productive mix of perspectives in governing our agency.

The Conservation Districts are the most efficient and effective local provider of services, products, and assistance to private land managers for conservation and protection of natural resources. The Conservation Commission provides direct assistance to Conservation Districts to better fulfill their function *"to bring together technical, financial, and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate these resources so that they meet the needs of the local land user for conservation of soil, water, and related resources"*.

### **I. POLICY STATEMENT AND LONG-RANGE GOAL FOCUS**

WSCC is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under Executive Order 02-03 and will strive to model the principles of sustainability in its operations, fleet management, and procurement, and provide guidance and education to the conservation districts and staff in the State of Washington along with our partnerships to fulfill this responsibility. We will strive to educate and engage each community through their local conservation district. We will comply with environmental laws and regulations while serving as a model by promoting sustainable practices that reduce the state's environmental impact.

The agency goals include the conservation of the public and private lands within the state and the bordering states, working together to ensure the safe and health of the lands for the future. WSCC encourages planned management of natural resources to prevent overexploitation, destruction, or neglect. Changing behaviors through education continues to be a fundamental basis of our programs. Effecting change at this level provides long-term sustainability compared to short-term regulatory actions, and promotes efficiency among regulatory agencies.

- We recognize that it is vital to plan for future generations and set long-term planning goals within our own agency and educating the conservation districts and partnerships to contribute to the overall plan. These three questions will help us to answer:
  - ✓ Is it good for business?
  - ✓ Is it good for society?
  - ✓ Is it good for the environment?
- The practice of sustainability is about creating new ways to live and prosper while ensuring an equitable, healthy future for all people and the planet. We will develop a process for managing and continually improving sustainability education, strategies, and initiatives.

## II. ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### *A Few of the Current Practices*

1. WSCC is co-located within the Department of Ecology and are reliant on them for most efficient use of the building resources such as heating, cooling, and lighting requirements. WSCC works closely with Ecology on information technology practices, benefiting both agencies. The Department of Ecology fosters sustainability practices.
2. Carpooling - Staff is encouraged to use state vehicles for transportation. Transportation is arranged with carpooling in the forefront. We provide carpool/rideshare opportunities to the meetings that are attended by the Commissioners and staff. We promote the STAR program and encourage participation in the CTR programs. Out of 16 employees, 9 are located within the Ecology building in Lacey. Four employees participate daily in Ecology's Commute Trip Reduction Plan (CTR).
3. We participate in the State Motor Pool vehicle program. Received one hybrid car from Motor Pool in April 2004 to replace one of the motor pool vehicles used by this agency. We now have 2 hybrids obtained by Motor Pool.
4. Global Positioning Systems available for 'round-about-trips' producing energy, time, and gas efficiencies.
5. Through the Department of Ecology a program is in place where recycling is required. There are bins within the break room that are separated by products – paper, colored paper, cardboard, newspapers, aluminum cans, glass bottles, CDs, batteries, etc.
6. 100% usage of chlorine-free recycled paper is being used at the Lacey office.
7. Surplus or recycle equipment when no longer needed.
8. Use of duplexing feature in one printer and our agency copier.
9. The agency is moving towards digital communication. All staff communicate through email. Documents are commonly scanned and transmitted electronically rather than printed onto paper and mailed.
10. Conference calls are held to reduce car emissions.
11. Participation in the Department of Ecology's programs and trainings is encouraged.
12. Sustainability is shared at staff meetings. Staff communication is encouraged.
13. The WSCC Newsletter features a sustainability article and tips. Each edition is sent electronically and available on the agency website.
14. Sustainability is incorporated in the WSCC Strategic Plan.
15. An agency Sustainability Team was established. Out of 16 employees, four participate on the team – two Field Service Managers and two administrative staff. The team will continue to review operating practices with an emphasis on sustainability practices.
16. Posting of information and documents online instead of hard copies. Grants Administrative Procedures Manual, Supervisor Handbook, Commission Meeting agendas, etc.
17. Weekly updates are sent electronically instead of a hard copy mailed which reduces the amount of paper for the Commission Meeting packets.
18. Reduce or eliminate waste as an inefficient or improper use of resources.

### *Long Range Goals*

1. Institutionalize sustainability as an agency value by developing written procedures/initiatives to ensure plan objectives are implemented and measured.
2. Raise employee awareness of sustainability in the workplace and home by collaborating with the Department of Ecology and other agencies to participate in sustainability workshops for interested staff.
3. Minimize energy and water use in the office and home.
4. Request additional hybrid cars from the State Motor Pool.
5. Shift to non-toxic, recycled, and remanufactured materials in purchasing.
6. Continue to reduce or eliminate waste as an inefficient or improper use of resources.

7. Continue progress toward digital government.
8. Continue to review procedures and plans for new sustainability ideas and progress.

### **III. ACTION PLAN**

#### ***Fleets and Transportation***

- By 2007, request one hybrid automobile (Escape) from the State Motor Pool to replace gas automobile. By continued requests for hybrid vehicles it will encourage the purchasing of more fuel alternative vehicles.
- Encourage flex schedules for eligible employees to reduce congestion and fuel consumption.
- Participate in the CTR program.
- Commission and staff will coordinate in the activities that provide the opportunity for carpooling. We will also encourage carpooling outside of the agency and within the conservation districts to events.
- Look for opportunities to hold meetings by conference calls instead of in-person meetings.
- Continue the use of electronic communication.

#### ***Purchase of Goods and Services***

- Utilize shared printers instead of personal printers where appropriate.
- When upgrading printers purchase equipment with duplexing capabilities whenever possible.
- Continue to follow our current procedures on equipment inventorying and life cycles to replace computer, printer, etc.
- Purchase only 'energy star' compliant electronic products.
- Engage in the environmentally preferable purchasing through Central Stores.
- Continue recycling program set in place. Move towards purchasing items with less packing to reduce waste.
- Purchase products in reusable, refillable, or returnable containers.
- Recycle by reusing office products: binders, folders, etc.
- Utilize rewritable media instead of single-use media.

#### ***Facility Construction, Operation and Maintenance***

- WSCC is co-located with the Department of Ecology in Lacey to share resources, keep operating costs down creating a more efficient use of energy, water, and economic resources.
- A program has been established to recycle paper, cardboard, bottles, batteries, cans, toner cartridges, and computer disks. Toner cartridges are sent back to vendor to be refurbished.
- The Department of Ecology has an automated program for the entire facility (inside and out) for reducing energy, water, and economic resources.
- Each office of the WSCC in coordination with Ecology has a "turn-off" procedure, committing to turn off lights and computers at the close of business in the interest of conserving energy.
- Implement a centralized data repository to reduce printed copies and filing, and assure consistency in data.

#### ***Health and Safety Programs***

- Purchase less-hazardous products which will improve employee safety, reduces regulatory liability, and lowers disposal costs.
- "Eco-friendly" cleaning products are used.
- Another benefit of co-locating with the Department of Ecology is their practice of non-pesticide methods to prevent pest problems.
- Practice following all MSDS handling and safety information and instruction. Provide training if necessary.

- Because of our location as an agency, we have the opportunities to participate in health and wellness events held here at the Department of Ecology. Health and wellness classes are offered weekly, along with walking paths on the grounds. Staff participation is encouraged.

#### **VI.IV. COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION**

Determine the most effective way to deliver sustainable practices and engage Commission, staff, conservation districts, and other partnerships. Identify and proceed. Some ways may be to:

- Post the agency Sustainability Plan on our website. Notify Commission, staff, conservation districts, and partnerships through email that we are committed to sustainable practices. Provide links to other websites that promote sustainable practices for encouragement.
- Write educational articles for the agency newsletter pertaining to sustainable practices.
- Regional Managers will encourage the conservation districts to practice sustainability within their own districts and educate the landowners they work with at every opportunity available.
- WSCC's Annual Reports reflect the agency and districts efforts in conservation and sustainability.
- Periodic emails sent with tips to prevent waste, recycling, etc.
- Email suggested sustainable quotes to staff to include in agency electronic communication.
- The conservation districts participate in the Envirothon program which educates students with a chance to get "up-close and personal" with natural resources offering both in-class curriculum and hands-on field experiences focused around ecology, natural resource management, and current environmental issues.

#### **V. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

We will meet our objectives by commitment of the Commission and staff to review and provide input to the Sustainability Plan and practices. It will be a continual work in progress. A few of the ways to encourage participation will be: a permanent spot on the staff meeting agendas, encourage RM's to share the sustainable practices that are discussed at the staff meetings with their conservation districts.

#### **VI. BIENNIAL PLAN OBJECTIVES**

- Develop an employee outreach, training, and involvement in sustainability practices and coordinate with the programs that are currently held at the Department of Ecology.
- Discuss sustainability awareness with staff, Commissioners, and conservation districts at every opportunity.
- The Conservation Commission Sustainable Plan will be posted on the website as a best practice along with links to other sites that may be useful.
- Encourage participation in sharing new ideas to enhance sustainability within the office and at home.
- Commit to using Central Stores environmentally preferable purchasing.
- Sustainable Plan and Practices will be included in our Strategic Plan.
- Find new ways for staff to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

#### **VII. ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

WSCC will report annually to the Office of Financial Management its progress on implementing the Sustainability Plan. The September 2003 Report will provide a baseline for performance measurements and goals for success.

We are committed to continually find ways to improve our resources responsibly that will result in tangible and permanent benefits for the environment. This report is just the beginning. We know there are many more opportunities to provide sustainability. New ideas and measures will be incorporated in the subsequent plans. We are dedicated to communicate and educate these practices within the agency, to the conservation districts, and our partners.