

**Washington Tribal Conservation Advisory Council
Video Teleconference
June 14th, 2011**

MINUTES

Agenda

WATCAC goals, tasks to work on, plan (WI strategic plans as an example) (9:30-10:30)
 Tribal Resource Assessment?
 Program Ranking Criteria?
 Practice Standards reviews?
 Structure, such as president, vice president, secretary/treasurer?
Detailed State Resource Assessment – Peter Bautista (10:30-11:00)
NRCS program information – Dave Brown (11:00-11:30)
Standards up for review (11:30-12:00)
Tribal conservation districts (12:00-12:30)
Meeting schedule change for August (12:30-12:40)
GPS training booked for our facility Aug 9-10; need alternative site to call in to, or a different date in August.
Identify agenda items for July 12 (12:40-12:50)

Participants

Colville Tribe
Kalispel Tribe
Quileute Tribe
Quinault Tribe
Shoalwater Bay Tribe
Skokomish Tribe
Snoqualmie Tribe
Squaxin Island Tribe
Suquamish Tribe
Swinomish Tribe
Tulalip Tribe
NRCS

Greeting from Roylene Rides at the Door, WA NRCS State Conservationist

Roylene welcomed the group, and asked everyone to introduce themselves. She then reviewed the agenda items, and turned the meeting over to Peter Bautista to discuss the State Resource Assessment.

State Resource Assessment, Peter Bautista, Assistant State Conservationist

Peter discussed the State Resource Assessment, which is an inventory of resource concerns, and the need to address tribal resources more accurately within it. Roylene noted that NRCS delayed interacting with the tribes until the WATCAC was formed because it is the proper vehicle for addressing this issue.

Peter outlined the process that began a couple of years ago, and the input that the Local Work Groups provided. During the two-year process, the inventory was gathered and priorities were

identified. The WATCAC noted that Usual and Accustomed areas need to be considered as part of their resource concerns. They will work with the SRA as a starting point in identifying their resource concerns and acres, but can customize it as needed.

Ranking Criteria, Dave Brown, Assistant State Conservationist

Dave Brown has not received much feedback on the ranking criteria materials that were sent out, but wants to tweak the ranking criteria based on comments from the tribes in time for FY12 applications. The WATCAC would like to include the creation/improvement of native food sources in programs such as EQIP and WHIP, and is interested in addressing wildlife habitat that is connected to lands other than agricultural. The tribes also would like to increase the hold-down for bridges to \$100K. Dave will add some questions to the ranking criteria, include the bridge increase, and send all out for comments. He will include a list of funded practices with units, i.e. feet of fence, number of trees planted, etc. Dave and the WATCAC set a goal to finalize ranking and practice lists for FY12 at the next meeting.

Colville noted that the more money put into bridges, the more need there will be for increased earmarks for tribes. A ranking process is needed to keep participation equitable for the tribes.

Quinault noted that the tribe currently has only one application annually but can see a future need for changes as more tribes get involved.

Swinomish asked to see non-tribal funding on a county-by-county basis, and Dave agreed to send that as well.

The EQIP deadline for FY12 was August 15th, but was extended to August 19th, 2011.

Standards up for review

The WATCAC has provided comments on the Stream Crossing (578) practice, which were forwarded to the national contact, and will be addressed at the state level.

Swinomish asked about the next steps in commenting. What are these, what is the chance of making changes, and what can the tribes do if no changes are made? Roylene explained that comments would be shared with the standards teams to work into the standards being revised.

Roylene noted two other standards posted for comment. These have passed the draft phase at the national level and are ready for states to adopt. NRCS has a year to finalize these so comments can still be submitted to us. The two practices are Fish Passage (396) and (400), and will be sent to the WATCAC for comments.

Tribal Conservation Districts

Nationwide, there are 36 tribal conservation districts. Tribes are forming TCDs because it fits NRCS's structure, and TCDs tend to get more funding from the agency. No states are known, however, to have both Tribal Conservation Advisory Councils and TCDs. Multi-tribe TCDs are possible but none have been formed. Washington's Local Work Group structure involves multiple CDs. Two Arizona tribes formed under state law (Gila River and CRIT), but it required a 2/3s vote of the counties. NRCS will work with Jackie Richter at Colville or Dick Gooby of INCA to speak to the group in more detail if they would like that.

Colville noted that an advantage of TCDs is being able to look at projects with off-reservation CDs, but a disadvantage is lack of funding. Roylene explained that CDs get state support but TCDs do not. Colville's TCD brings matters to NRCS's attention but the TCD needs to work more closely with the tribal council to get assistance.

Roylene identified the Washington Association of Conservation Districts as an opportunity for tribes to interact at the state level. WACD goes to Washington DC the second weekend in July to discuss needs/concerns, and they have offered to include the tribes, which does not happen often.

Quinault noted that TCDs sound like a good way to handle tribal affairs, but to become advisory regarding funds on non-tribal lands may take something else. Roylene suggested that the WATCAC work with the State Technical Advisory Committee. Working with the Conservation Commission was suggested as well. A presentation from the WATCAC to the Commission, and having the Commission's chairman and executive director come to the WATCAC were identified as ways to start this process.

WATCAC goals

Goals for the groups were discussed briefly. Swinomish and Colville suggested continuing as they are for now, and getting more tribes on board before addressing goals. The group concurred. So far 9-10 tribes are participating, 13 have made verbal commitments to participate, but ideally, the WATCAC will involve at least 16 tribes.

August meeting

Roylene will try to find an alternate location for the August VTC rather than change the date. Kalispel's Quest Casino was suggested.

Agenda Items for next teleconference

- Challenges with CIGs – how to simplify the process
- State practices, practice standards feedback
- Adding prescribed burning as a practice
- Finalize ranking criteria and practice list for FY12
- Tribes as TSPs
- SRA/TRA – how to get tribal data for next year's assessment/funding request