Minutes

Washington State Technical Advisory Committee

Date | time 02/08/2024 09:30 AM In-Person & Remote| Meeting called to order by Nick Vira

# In Attendance - 28

Roylene Comes at Night, Nick Vira, Dan Calvert, Fenner Yarborough, Angie Reseland, Mike Baden, Keith Griswold, Nate Gallahan, Dan Larson, Angela Mitcham, Karen Bunce, Cameron Stoflet, Randall Chipman, Ron Cummings, Kaitlin Davies, Bobby Evans, Travis Godeaux, Heather Wendt, Aubrey Hoxie, Larry Cochran, Robert Compton, Austin Shero, Robin Slate, Hannah Tomlinson, Michael Crower, Allan Warren, David Huggins, Eun Lee

# ANNOUNCEMENT

 **Introduction & Housekeeping by** **Nick Vira, State Partnership Liaison**

**Opening Remarks – Roylene Comes at Night, NRCS WA, State Conservationist**

Welcome everyone. FY24 Funding started! Planning FY25.

30 additional staff since Oct. 170 employees in NRCS WA. 20 priority positions in hiring. 17 more staff thru partnership agreements.

49 obligated contracts $760K. 64 outreach events completed since Oct & scheduled 178 thru Sep.

Over 1800 application in system. Encourage producers to apply even if you don’t get fund this year. It shows the need of additional fund.

Requested additional $5 million from headquarters for additional applications received.

Conservation Innovation Grant Program (CIG) will be announced in April. Urban Grant Program deadline shortly.

Conservation Stewardship Program is being revisited by a national team with local representation: National run program. Adjusting for more flexibility to fit for WA state.

We want to hear from you why it doesn’t fit for you so we can feed back to national team for improving CSP.

Target to get out new CSP program is by Oct 1st, 2025.

State Training calendar available, pls contact Bobby Evans if interested. No flexibility of changing training date.

**Nick Vira, NRCS WA, Partnership Liaison**

Two Grants – 1. Climate Conservation Corp: Opportunity to build the next generation of conservation leaders. No match requirement. Host organization use this money to pay hourly rates to future conservationist like internship up to 18 month.. Could begin as early as the end of Fiscal year. The funding can be used for outreach, education, conversation/technical assistance workforce development and training. Application due on **March 8t**h.

2. Urban Grant– 100% grant. Proposal based flexible approach to accommodate various situations to stand up urban conservation. Deadline is **April 9th**. Contact Nick for more info.

Subcommittees activities with STAC for Easement, Soil health, Wildlife and CART.

**Bobby Evans, NRCS, WA, State Resource Conservationist**

- Established training calendar, contact Bobby (Robert) Evans if interested in attending.

- NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) available to utilize. [Field Office Technical Guide | NRCS - USDA](https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/)

 Able to document search. Focus on current, updated standards, implementation requirements and planner guidance as well as Engineering and Ecological Science. Any comments & feedback to Bobby.

[Conservation Practice Standards | Natural Resources Conservation Service (usda.gov)](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/resources/guides-and-instructions/conservation-practice-standards) Videos included.

-Interim Conservation Practice: 805 Amending Soil Properties with Lime especially in pasture settings. Just uploaded implementation requirements.

812 Raised Beds, new interim practice, allowable to have max 48 inch height in high tunnel.

821 Low Tunnel, implementation requirement in FOTG

Organic Management System

825 Planting for Soil Microbiology management

-Eco-Sci Staffing

Assistant State Soil Scientist Joe Dyer retired in end of Dec. Will be announced in Usajobs.gov soon.

A Study Lead position for Plant Material Center is open. Info can be shared and apply if interested.

-Soil Health Trailer: For training and outreach. We plan to get one soon.

**Nick Vira, NRCS WA, Partnership Liaison**

Riparian Buffer Subcommittee under STAC – Under EQIP. Has been successful and looking for more growth. Need CD leadership and other local leadership about 10 members to improve program. Contact Nick, if you or anyone in your organization interested in.

Local Working Group – 6 out of 10 already met. Rest of the meetings will meet next month. Outreach and recruitment and developing sub EQIP funding pool. IRA project proposals by LWG and tribes.

March 14th at 9:00, Q&A Period for group chairs and other who interested in.

**Keith Griswold, NRCS WA, ASTC-Programs**

Program updates.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)- Agricultural Lands Easements (ALE) 2nd sign up- allocated $2,624,546. Received 2 applications. 2nd sign up was announced 02/19/2024 (one million $ available) and deadline is Mar 11th.

Riparian Buffer fund pool – Allocated $750,000. Received 9 eligible applications. Funded 6 app @ $721,608. Will award more contracts if additional funds became available. Applicants are located Grays Harbor, Spokane and Whitman,

Act Now fund pools select for WA FY24 – requested additional funds to contract additional Act Now Applications. Please work with local work groups with your Conservation District or District Conservationist to apply Act now.

RCPP – A list of our existing 2018 Farm Bill projects. S1.5 billion IRA funds for RCPP for this year and total $1.8 billion RCPP funding nationwide. Request for proposal announcement will come our soon. Please work with Laura Williams, State RCPP Coordinator.

Payment is based on payment rate of the program not cost sharing of actual cost because it is contract.

**Nate Gallahan, NRCS WA, Public Affairs Specialist**

Resources

 [Farmers.gov](https://www.farmers.gov/) A site chock full of information on everything conservation and assistance.

 [Conservation at Work Video Series](https://www.farmers.gov/conservation/conservation-at-work) 74 short videos available and a bunch of our practices!

 [OneSpan & Box](https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/signing-and-sharing-documents%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank%22%20%5Co%20%22https%3A//www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/signing-and-sharing-documents) Learn how to digitally sign documents and share large files.

 [NRCS-Washington Website](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/conservation-by-state/washington/washington-local-working-groups) Find all of our Washington-specific information like program ranking dates and practices.

 [NRCS-WA State Technical Advisory Committee](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/conservation-state/washington/technical-committee) Find all the STAC meeting materials and info on future meetings.

 [NRCS-WA Facts Sheets & Guides](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/conservation-by-state/washington/washington-fact-sheets-guides) Tons of info on everything from careers in conservation to urban agriculture

 [GovDelivery](https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/stay-connected) Our primary means in instantly emailing the latest and greatest info, such as program ranking dates.

 [Service Center Locator](https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator) Find us, near you!

Any comments or feedback with Website or other info, contact Nate Gallahan.

**Closing Remarks – Roylene Comes at Night, NRCS WA, State Conservationist**

Thank you for your time today!

# Q& A/ Feedback and co

Q&A: RCPP announcement coming out possibly in March about 1.8 billion.

Q&A: about Practices for rainwater storage. 558, 636, 620. Encourage to check FOTG Section 4. More info, individual standard, payment rates and scenarios descriptions to Section 1.

Q&A: Getting fund for Community Garden for non profit. Challenging due to EQIP practices requirements but available with registering entity with FSA to meet land control. Community Garden Plan available. New Urban Grant would work as well.

# Next Meeting

April 25th 2024 Location TBD.