



Washington State Auditor's Office

Government that works for citizens

Accountability Audit Report

Washington State Conservation Commission

For the period July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2015

Published July 21, 2016

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Washington State Auditor's Office

July 21, 2016

Mr. Mark Clark, Executive Director
Washington State Conservation Commission
Olympia, Washington

Report on Accountability

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you to promote accountability, integrity and openness in government. The State Auditor's Office takes seriously our role of providing state and local governments with assurance and accountability as the independent auditor of public accounts. In this way, we strive to help government work better, cost less, deliver higher value and earn greater public trust.

Independent audits provide essential accountability and transparency for Commission operations. This information is valuable to management, the governing body and public stakeholders when assessing the government's stewardship of public resources.

The attached comprises our report on the Commission's compliance and safeguarding of public resources. Our independent audit report describes the overall results and conclusions for areas we examined. We appreciate the opportunity to work with your staff and we value your cooperation during the audit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Troy X. Kelley".

TROY KELLEY
STATE AUDITOR
OLYMPIA, WA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Audit Summary	4
Related Reports	5
Information About The Commission	6
About The State Auditor’s Office	7

AUDIT SUMMARY

Results in brief

In most areas we audited, Commission operations complied with applicable requirements and provided adequate safeguarding of public resources. The Commission also complied with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures in most of the areas we examined.

However, we noted certain matters that we communicated to Commission management in a letter dated June 30, 2016, related to grant disbursement monitoring and credit card purchases. We appreciate the Commission's commitment to resolving those matters.

About the audit

This report contains the results of our independent accountability audit of the Washington State Conservation Commission from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2015.

Management is responsible for ensuring compliance and adequate safeguarding of public resources from fraud, loss or abuse. This includes the design, implementation and maintenance of internal controls relevant to these objectives.

Our audit involved performing procedures to obtain evidence about the Commission's uses of public resources, compliance with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures, and internal controls over such matters.

In keeping with general auditing practices, we do not examine every transaction, activity or area. Instead, the areas examined were those representing the highest risk of fraud, loss, abuse, or noncompliance. The following areas were examined during this audit period:

- Open public meetings
- State grant monitoring and disbursements
- Credit cards
- Payroll

RELATED REPORTS

Financial

We perform an annual audit of the statewide basic financial statements, as required by state law (RCW 43.09.310). Our opinion on these financial statements is included in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) prepared by and available from the Office of Financial Management.

The CAFR reflects the financial activities of all funds, organizations, institutions, agencies, departments and offices that are part of the state's reporting entity. That report is issued by the Office of Financial Management in December of each year and can be found at www.ofm.wa.gov.

A summary of the audit for the period ending June 30, 2015, can be found at: <http://www.sao.wa.gov/resources/Pages/AnnualReports.aspx>

Federal programs

In accordance with the Single Audit Act, we annually audit major federal programs administered by the state of Washington. Rather than perform a single audit of each agency, we audit the state as a whole. The results of that audit are published in a report issued by the Office of Financial Management in March of each year.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMMISSION

The Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) was created by the State Legislature in 1939 to support conservation districts through administrative and operational oversight; program coordination; distribution and monitoring of state funds; and promotion of district services. The Commission works with all 45 conservation districts and other partners to administer a voluntary, incentive-based approach that empowers landowners to conserve natural resources.

The Commission is governed by a 10-member board representing Governor appointees, state agencies and conservation districts. The SCC has a staff of 22 employees. Fifteen employees are based in Olympia and seven work in satellite locations across the state to monitor conservation district activities and administer programs. The SCC is primarily funded through state appropriations. The majority of its budget is distributed to conservation districts to fund projects and operations. The SCC operating budget for the 2011-13 biennium was \$13.2 million, and \$13.5 million for the 2013-15 biennium. The Commission distributed the majority of these funds to conservation districts.

Contact information related to this report	
Address:	Washington State Conservation Commission P.O. Box 47721 Olympia, WA 98504-7721
Contact:	Shana Joy, Puget Sound Regional Manager
Telephone:	(360) 480-2078
Website:	www.scc.wa.gov

Information current as of report publish date.

Audit history

You can find current and past audit reports for the Washington State Conservation Commission at <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch>.

ABOUT THE STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE

The State Auditor's Office is established in the state's Constitution and is part of the executive branch of state government. The State Auditor is elected by the citizens of Washington and serves four-year terms.

We work with our audit clients and citizens to achieve our vision of government that works for citizens, by helping governments work better, cost less, deliver higher value, and earn greater public trust.

In fulfilling our mission to hold state and local governments accountable for the use of public resources, we also hold ourselves accountable by continually improving our audit quality and operational efficiency and developing highly engaged and committed employees.

As an elected agency, the State Auditor's Office has the independence necessary to objectively perform audits and investigations. Our audits are designed to comply with professional standards as well as to satisfy the requirements of federal, state, and local laws.

Our audits look at financial information and compliance with state, federal and local laws on the part of all local governments, including schools, and all state agencies, including institutions of higher education. In addition, we conduct performance audits of state agencies and local governments as well as [fraud](#), state [whistleblower](#) and [citizen hotline](#) investigations.

The results of our work are widely distributed through a variety of reports, which are available on our [website](#) and through our free, electronic [subscription](#) service.

We take our role as partners in accountability seriously, and provide training and technical assistance to governments, and have an extensive quality assurance program.

Contact information for the State Auditor's Office	
Public Records requests	PublicRecords@sao.wa.gov
Main telephone	(360) 902-0370
Toll-free Citizen Hotline	(866) 902-3900
Website	www.sao.wa.gov