

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Public Meeting Minutes
September 10, 2008**

I. Time and Place of Meeting.

A regular meeting of the Board of Supervisor of the Whatcom Conservation District was held at the Ag Service Center, 6975 Hannegan Rd, Lynden, Washington on September 10, 2008, at 6:30 p.m.

II. Attendance and Quorum.

The following Supervisors, being a quorum of the Board, were present:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dick Yoder	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ed Stone
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sabina Gouran	<input type="checkbox"/>	Joe Heller
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Terry Lenssen		

Also in attendance were:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	George Boggs, District Manager	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Alex Hall, NRCS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dawn Bekenyi, Admin. Assistant		Nichole Marcillac

III. Meeting Called to Order.

Dick Yoder as Chairman of the meeting called it to order at 8:38 p.m.

IV. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting.

Ed Stone moved that the minutes of the August 13, 2008 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Sabina Gouran seconded the motion. The motion passed.

V. Financial Report.

The financial report was mailed to the Board with their draft minutes from the August meeting.

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant, asked if there were any questions regarding the Financial Report. There were no questions.

Sabina Gouran moved to approve the Financial Report. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed. Upon motion made and duly seconded, the Treasurer's Report was approved.

Accounts Payable –

A copy of District invoices and incurred expenses, as listed in the Accounts Payable Report were reviewed and approved. The Board further authorizes the payment of District expenses incurred subject to their review and approval at the next Board meeting.

The following voucher/warrants are approved for payment:

August 2008 - balance					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>16234</u>	through	<u>16247</u>	and totaling	<u>44,894.01</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>16248</u>	through	<u>16262</u>	and totaling	<u>26,721.33</u>
September 2008					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>16263</u>	through	<u>16274</u>	and totaling	<u>4,688.01</u>

Payroll check numbers:	<u>16275</u>	through	<u>16286</u>	and totaling	<u>23,613.54</u>
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>16287</u>	through	<u>16288</u>	and totaling	<u>157.21</u>

moved by Sabina Gouran. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VI. Action Items.

A. Approval of Contracts.

CREP Contracts –

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) is the administrative lead on the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) joint program. The FSA County Committee approves all plans. The current policy is that once FSA approves the Federal Contract and CREP plan the contract is then brought to the Board meeting for its approval. The Board approved the standard-language contract.

There were four new projects submitted for Board approval.

Sabina Gouran moved to ratify the CREP contracts for Ilse Harmoney (08-04-CR:08-19), Eric & Robin Hitz (08-04-CR:08-10), Brian & Molly Smith (08-04-CR:08-14), and Richard Whittaker & Peggy Gardner (08-04-CR:08-21). Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

George mentioned that there is a possibility of a state CREP program that would do installation and maintenance, but will not provide rental income. Nose pumps, fencing, buffers would be eligible.

Inter-local Agreements –

An Inter-Local Agreement with Whatcom County to license the use of high quality aerial photos was submitted for approval. The cost for the license is approximately \$1,000 per year.

Ed Stone moved to approve and sign the inter-local agreement with Whatcom County to license the use of high quality aerial photos. Sabina Gouran seconded the motion. The motion passed.

An Inter-local Agreement was drafted to share Andrew Phay's services with Thurston Conservation District. Thurston CD will reimburse the Whatcom Conservation District for Andrew's services to redo their database.

Sabina Gouran moved to approve and sign the inter-local agreement with Thurston Conservation District. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

B. Calendar of Events –

Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) Officers and Directors meeting – September 16 in Bow at the Plant Materials Center

WA Conservation Commission meeting – September 18 in Friday Harbor

Skagit Conservation District Annual Awards Banquet – September 30 in Mt. Vernon

Northwest Area Association Meeting – October 22 in Mt. Vernon

WACD Annual Convention – December 2-4 in Wenatchee. Dick said that he would attend the WACD convention.

VII. Other Business.

A. Supervisor Reports.

Dick Yoder –

Issues of concern were brought up as potential resolutions for the WACD meetings. Dick mentioned three items to address. First, Dick brought up the issue of improving the river carrying capacity and fish habitat (deep, cool water) by gravel mining. The second issue was off-channel storage for excess water that would assist with flooding and allow for water use in the summer. There was also discussion regarding health issues of river water. Sabina stated that people report getting sick from water in or around the river.

Sabina is opposed to dredging the River due to the negative impacts to fish and water quality. Terry mentioned that a gravel company has rights to dredge the River, but does not do so due to the high cost. It was determined that for health issues of people and fish, it would be best to encourage activities to make the river deeper and cooler. George volunteered to ask a representative from Whatcom County River and Flood Division and/or the Tribes to come discuss options on how to deepen water in rivers at the next Board meeting. At that point the Board can ask about gravel removal.

Sabina asked about the movement approximately three years ago to purchase the river meander zone. The meander zone has been mapped, but nothing further has been done.

The third item was cost-share eligibility for electrical work. Electric power for pumps is not an eligible item for cost-share. However the NRCS will cost-share on new diesel engines for pumps. The thought is to use electric pumps for better air quality. The Board would like to encourage NRCS to allow a flat rate for installing necessary electrical outlets for electric pumps. It appears that some electrical work can be cost-shared as a part of a pump. However it is dependant upon the local work group's interpretation. Alex suggested that the Board go to the local work group. He suggested that the issue be brought to Steve Nissley who could then pass the matter on sighting the air quality concerns. Dave Brown is the person who would make the policy determination. It was suggested that all policies with regards to practices should be in writing to facilitate implementation of the program.

Ed Stone –

The beaver deceiver seems to be working, but there hasn't been much rain to create beaver activity.

B. Alex Hall, NRCS.

EQIP –

There are 22 EQIP applications. The local work group is still unaware of how much cost-share funds that will be allocated. Work is being done on the 58 existing EQIP contracts during the construction season. Alex informed the Board that due to update of their payment and sign-off software no contract modifications can be done during the end of the fiscal year. There will also be a window where no payments will be made.

EQIP Practice List –

Alex has received several recommendations for the next EQIP practice list. The Bertrand Watershed Improvement District (WID) approached NRCS to see if converting surface water withdrawal to well withdrawal could be an approved practice. The shift to well water would save water in the stream for fish. Terry mentioned the water rights issue. The Department of Ecology (WDOE) would have to be contacted for their approval of the practice. George informed the Board that the Bertrand WID needs to do something about the water flow issue. This is one way to address the issue. The Bertrand WID needs to manage the water rights in the area. Water quality and water quantity would be insured through their plan. The concept is to delay the impact of water withdrawal by drawing water out of a well further than the stream. Test wells to

determine the optimum distance have been funded. Stakeholder, the tribes and WDOE would have to approve the water rights change.

It is likely that the local work group will not meet until next year. This gives us time to get more input for the next EQIP practice list. It was suggested that NRCS set up a public meeting in November to get producer input on the EQIP program and recommend changes to the EQIP practice list. Recommendations on how to get the word out were given. NRCS should publicize in auction barn, Farm Friends, radio, Lynden Tribune and associations. Alex will set up a time and place and get the word out.

NRCS security –

NRCS had a theft at the Lake Stevens office. A laptop was stolen. As a result a National Bulletin was issued instructing NRCS employees to not have any personal or client information on their computer hard drives. All information should be kept on the network server.

C. Ed Stone.

Ed asked if Whatcom County was still doing septic tank inspections. There was some confusion as to whether the inspections are still taking place. Dick had heard that they were not. Terry had to get the existing septic system inspected for his permits to build a barn. Sabina said that Whatcom County has five or six people that are doing septic tank inspections. She suggested that Ed call the Health Department and ask. Ed was wondering how the inspections would impact our workload. George mentioned that Skagit County has a program that goes through their Conservation District. He did not think it would impact our District much at this point.

D. George Boggs.

Peak Oil Meeting –

The group is doing a sector by sector “brain dump” on foreseeable impacts. The group will be done with the review by the end of the year. Then they are to hold public sessions where knowledgeable people are invited to discuss the issues. The group has increased their meeting schedule to every Thursday.

Conservation Planning –

George and Chris Clark attended a meeting in Cle Elum regarding conservation farm planning. All farm plans are different through out the Districts. This confuses the regulators. There is also the concern that the planner may not be addressing all of the farm water quality concerns. The WA Conservation Commission wants to develop a farm plan with uniform elements and format. A group of experience planners will come up with the uniform conservation plan format that will follow NRCS guidelines.

The group hopes to train employees on the new format at the Washington Association of District Employees training next June. There is concern that some employees may not be qualified. The Conservation Commission will inventory employee knowledge, identify needed practice skill sets by subject matter, look at what type of planning is done and where and develop what is needed in the way of proficiencies and set up training opportunities and workshops. They will set up a database of employee credentials and training needs. Training and Conservation District employee oversight formerly provided by NRCS is declining. NRCS no longer gives “job approval authority” to Conservation District employees. Chuck Timblin will be on the conservation plan format committee. George will help with the certification issue.

Abbotsford/Sumas Aquifer Stakeholder meeting –

George and Nichole attended the Abbotsford/Sumas Aquifer stakeholder meeting. The Canadians are looking at water quantity and water quality in the aquifer. They are talking about getting water from Stave Lake, 200 miles north of the aquifer. In the meantime, they are digging 18 wells in the aquifer north of the border. 4 wells are across from the North Wood casino and will impact Bertrand and Fishtrap Creeks. They would like to get input from Washington residents and stakeholders regarding their aquifer management plan. There will be a meeting in October to

discuss the plans for the aquifer with Lynden residents. In February they will have a model of the aquifer to show at their forum.

Livestock Stakeholders meeting –

A livestock stakeholders' teleconference is scheduled for September 22. George reviewed the topics to be discussed.

E. Nichole Marcillac.

Nichole asked the Board about what they want from the SLIM position. The District needs farm planning assistance. There is no dairy livestock research from WSU Extension in our county. Nichole gave the Board a brief overview of her background. She has a doctorate in Animal Science and Environmental Studies with an emphasis on Air Quality. She has been an environmental management specialist who primarily works with dairies and feedlots. She has worked on researching BMPs that address air emissions allowing Ag to be proactive on air quality issues. An example was limiting the crude protein intake in cows to help air quality. Manure application methods have been worked on a lot in Colorado. There are air quality concerns with big gun application. In Colorado there is more dry manure and dry manure storage. They are getting away from flush barns and ponds due to freezing. The dry manure is composted and 70% of the sales go to the state for construction.

She is interested in working for the Conservation District because she would be working in a smaller area with just Whatcom County not the whole state. She would be able to see more of an impact of her work. She would like the District to have an education program about air and water quality issues to be the place that farmers come for answers.

There was discussion regarding the trials that Shabtai Bittman is doing in British Columbia. Air quality issues are ahead of the curve in Washington State. Dick asked how they would be introduced to farmers here. Nichole said that air quality BMPs can be rolled into current water quality BMPs.

VIII. Record of Board Actions.

08-75 Ed Stone moved that the minutes of the August 13, 2008 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Sabina Gouran seconded the motion. The motion passed.

08-76 Sabina Gouran moved to approve the Financial Report. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed. Upon motion made and duly seconded, the Treasurer's Report was approved.

08-77

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08-79 Ed Stone moved to approve and sign the inter-local agreement with Whatcom County to license the use of high quality aerial photos. Sabina Gouran seconded the motion. The motion passed.

08-80 Sabina Gouran moved to approve and sign the inter-local agreement with Thurston Conservation District. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

IX. Adjournment.

There being no further business before the meeting, Ed Stone moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 p.m. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting on motion duly made, seconded and carried, adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Dated: November 10, 2008

Approved: _____

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant