

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Public Meeting Minutes
September 11, 2014**

I. Time and Place of Meeting.

A regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the Whatcom Conservation District (WCD) was held at the Ag Service Center, 6975 Hannegan Rd, Lynden, Washington on September 11, 2014, at 7:00 p.m.

II. Attendance and Quorum.

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

Joe Heller, Chair	Larry Helm, Vice-Chair
Larry Davis, Treasurer	Dan Heeringa
Dick Yoder	

Also in attendance were:

George Boggs, Executive Director	Alex Hall, NRCS staff
Dawn Bekenyi, Admin. Assistant	

III. Meeting Called to Order.

Joe Heller, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

IV. Public Comment (written or in person).

There were no public comments.

V. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting.

Larry Helm moved that the minutes of the August 14, 2014 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VI. Financial Report.

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

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant, presented the financial report. Larry Helm asked for a detailed budget for the Birch Bay project. Dawn answered a few questions regarding payments.

Larry Davis moved to approve the Financial Report. Dick Yoder 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:

Aug 2014 - balance				
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>21758</u>	through	<u>21763</u>	and totaling <u>5,022.02</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>21764</u>	through	<u>21779</u>	and totaling <u>29,122.94</u>

September 2014					
Voucher (check) numbers	21780	through	21814	and totaling	54,388.91
Payroll check numbers:	21815	through	21830	and totaling	31,039.32

Moved by Larry Davis. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VII. Action Items.

A. Approval of Conservation Plans.

Small Farm Plan Approval –

Wayne Chaudiere completed a farm plan for Dave and Kim Sauter. It fulfills the requisite elements for that type of plan. Staff recommended Board approval.

Larry Helm moved to approve the Small Farm Conservation Farm Plan for:

- **Dave and Kim Sauter.**

Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

B. Approval of Contracts.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Contracts –

CREP is a joint federal and state program to enhance fish habitat and protect water quality. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) is the administrative lead. District resource specialists (Wayne Chaudiere, Frank Corey or Emily Hirsch) works with a landowner to develop a conservation plan that includes practices meeting the landowner's needs. It is reviewed for technical sufficiency by the Natural Resources Conservation Service representative (Alex Hall) and George Boggs. The landowner signs the plan and it is passed on to FSA. The FSA County Oversight Committee (COC) approves all CREP plans. The current District policy is that once FSA approves the Federal Contract and CREP plan, then the CREP maintenance contract is brought to the Board for its approval. Absent unusual circumstances, the Board approves the standard-language maintenance agreement prescribed by the State Conservation Commission.

There were 6 CREP maintenance contracts submitted for Board approval.

Larry Helm moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contracts provided by Emily Hirsch for:

- **Cindy Hollinsworth – 14-04-CS:14-11**
- **Elvin Kalsbeek – 14-04-CS:14-15**
- **Darlene St. Pierre – 14-04-CS:14-14**
- **Gwen & Steve Wittwer – 14-04-CS:14-13**

Further, to ratify the CREP maintenance contract provided by Wayne Chaudiere for:

- **Brent Cowden – 14-04-CS:14-16**

Further, to ratify the CREP maintenance contract provided by Frank Corey for:

- **Kathy Varner – 14-04-CS:14-23**

Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

C. WSCC Shellfish Cost-share Project Ranking.

There was one additional Shellfish Cost-share Project proposal submitted for Board review. The new project was reviewed and has 135 points. Chris reviewed the ranking questions and his concerns about how to award points. There was discussion regarding certain questions and if they could be interpreted differently by different staff. Chris reviewed the current situation of the producer that was being ranked. George pointed out that the producer can appeal the ranking process to the Conservation Commission if they don't like the points that they were awarded during the ranking process. The ranking questions are meant to tease out the behavior of a cooperator. Alex Hall said that NRCS ranks projects as a group to make sure that all projects have the same interpretation of the questions and ranking process. It was decided to table the project until the October meeting to allow staff to talk about the ranking process and the points awarded with the producer prior to final Board action.

George reviewed the list of Shellfish Cost-share Projects submitted to the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) last month for consideration to funds. George explained that the WSCC proposed to fund projects that were clustered on the location map. The Board confirmed that they would only support funding for projects with a ranking of 140 points and higher.

Larry Helm moved to accept funding from the Washington State Conservation Commission Shellfish Cost-share for projects that were ranked with 140 points or higher and decline funding for the project ranked at 90 points. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

George explained that Commission criteria for prioritizing projects included proximity to other projects. Accordingly, this would subordinate a project with a higher WCD environmental benefit score.

Larry Davis stated that the WSCC asked Conservation District Boards to rank local cost-share projects according to priority and a matrix to do that was developed by our District. The projects have been reviewed and ranked and submitted to the Commission for funding consideration. Larry Davis moved that the Board request that the Commission honor the list in the order that they were ranked and provide funding accordingly. If the Commission is unable to do so, the Board will respectfully decline accepting funding for any projects with lesser environmental benefit scoring. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Larry Davis authorized Joe Heller, Chair, to enter into cost-share agreements with landowners using the standard contract agreement for shellfish cost-share program participants funded in order of priority as ranked by the Whatcom Conservation District. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

D. Edge of Field Contract.

Initially there were several people interested in the edge of field study project that Nichole will conduct. Currently due to federal program constraints for the program only one landowner is still interested. Nichole wrote up the proposal and cost estimate. The Conservation District will conduct the testing and maintain the equipment. The cooperator will relinquish all right and title in the equipment to the District.

Larry Helm moved that the Conservation District enter into a cooperator agreement to participate in the Edge of Field Testing Study and hold harmless the cooperator for cost in excess of what NRCS will reimburse. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

E. Historical Photos.

Andrew Phay informed the Board that there are photos and slides in our back storage room that go back to the 1940s. Before these historical photos deteriorate to the point that they are unusable, we would like to send them off to a company to get them digitally scanned. He provided an estimation of the number of slides and photos and the cost to get them digitally scanned. The estimated was a bit low when Andrew pulled out all of the photos and slides. He asked the Board for an increase in the estimated budget to do the archiving.

Larry Helm moved to increase the budget to have the historical photos and slides professionally digitally scanned for archiving for an estimated \$1,738. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VIII. Other Business.

A. Alex Hall, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) –

Alex reported that they have completed the first round of EQIP funding. There are 6 contracts. He told the Board the type of projects funded.

There were a lot of initiatives in funding this year. There are three contracts funded through the Water Quality Initiative.

There was one Edge of Field Initiative contract, which is a special project for Whatcom County.

There were 600 applications for the RCPP. Each state received two. Frank Corey submitted a proposal on behalf of the District and it was one of the two that was invited to make a final application for the RCPP.

B. Supervisor Reports.

Larry Davis –

Larry will attend the WSCC tour and meeting hosted by the Whatcom Conservation District in September.

Larry Helm –

Larry asked about a farm plan. He asked the County for a copy of his plan, but they could not produce one. The District provided him with information, but Larry was to provide the County with a checklist plan.

Larry stated that the Water Associations are concerned about how the new WIDs may impact their water rights.

C. George Boggs, Executive Director.

NW Area Meeting – The NW Area meeting is coming up in October and will be hosted by King CD. George asked if the Board had any resolutions. There were no suggestions.

WSCC Tour and Meeting – Whatcom Conservation District is hosting the Washington State Conservation Commission's Board meeting and field tour and interactive meeting on September 17, 2014.

Skagit Conservation Award Banquet – The Board was invited to attend the award banquet on September 18 in Sedro Woolley.

WSCC Nutrient Management Budget Request – George provided the first draft of the nutrient management ask for the Washington State Conservation Commission.

Termination of Building Lease – George met with NRCS staff, Rick Noble and Tony Sunseri. USDA would not remove the 30-day notice clause from any lease agreement. George met with the architect. He provided NRCS with a letter of termination of their lease as of January 31, 2015.

Dairy Federation – Terry Lenssen, Dairy Federation, would like to meet with some Board members regarding water quality and the Lummi Nation letter regarding the closure of the shellfish beds. Dan Heeringa, Larry Helm and George agreed to meet with the local representatives.

Hedgerows – There is a group that is looking into how long hedgerows last. There is concern regarding hedgerows encroaching into fields. Wayne is looking into orchard equipment to prune the hedgerows. WCD is assisting the Washington Department of Agriculture to study how well hedgerows can function to protect water quality.

The Board asked for Aneka Sweeney, to attend the October meeting, so that they can meet her.

IX. Record of Board Actions.

14-69 Larry Helm moved that the minutes of the August 14, 2014 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-70 Larry Davis moved to approve the Financial Report. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed. Upon motion made and duly seconded, the Treasurer's Report was approved.

14-71

The following voucher/warrants are approved for payment:

Aug 2014 - balance

Voucher (check) numbers	<u>21758</u>	through	<u>21763</u>	and totaling	<u>5,022.02</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>21764</u>	through	<u>21779</u>	and totaling	<u>29,122.94</u>

September 2014

Voucher (check) numbers	<u>21780</u>	through	<u>21814</u>	and totaling	<u>54,388.91</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>21815</u>	through	<u>21830</u>	and totaling	<u>31,039.32</u>

Moved by Larry Davis. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-72 Larry Helm moved to approve the Small Farm Conservation Farm Plan for:

- Dave and Kim Sauter.

Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-73 Larry Helm moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contracts provided by Emily Hirsch for:

- Cindy Hollinsworth – 14-04-CS:14-11
- Elvin Kalsbeek – 14-04-CS:14-15
- Darlene St. Pierre – 14-04-CS:14-14
- Gwen & Steve Wittwer – 14-04-CS:14-13

Further, to ratify the CREP maintenance contract provided by Wayne Chaudiere for:

- Brent Cowden – 14-04-CS:14-16

Further, to ratify the CREP maintenance contract provided by Frank Corey for:

- Kathy Varner – 14-04-CS:14-23

Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-74 Larry Helm moved to accept funding from the Washington State Conservation Commission Shellfish Cost-share for projects that were ranked with 140 points or higher and decline funding for the project ranked at 90 points. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-75 Larry Davis stated that the WSCC asked Conservation District Boards to rank local cost-share projects according to priority and a matrix to do that was developed by our District. The projects have been reviewed and ranked and submitted to the Commission for funding consideration. Larry Davis moved that the Board request that the Commission honor the list in the order that they were ranked and provide funding accordingly. If the Commission is unable to do so, the Board will respectfully decline accepting funding for any projects with lesser environmental benefit scoring. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-76 Larry Davis authorized Joe Heller, Chair, to enter into cost-share agreements with landowners using the standard contract agreement for shellfish cost-share program participants funded in order of priority as ranked by the Whatcom Conservation District. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-77 Larry Helm moved that the Conservation District enter into a cooperator agreement to participate in the Edge of Field Testing Study and hold harmless the cooperator for cost in excess of what NRCS will reimburse. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-78 Larry Helm moved to increase the budget to have the historical photos and slides professionally digitally scanned for archiving for an estimated \$1,738. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

X. Adjournment.

There being no further business before the meeting, Larry Helm moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting, on motion duly made, seconded and carried, adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Dated: October 27, 2014

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant

Approved: _____