

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Public Meeting Minutes
October 9, 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 October 9, 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 Davis, Treasurer

Larry Helm, Vice-Chair
Dick Yoder

Also in attendance were:

George Boggs, Executive Director
Dawn Bekenyi, Admin. Assistant

Alex Hall, NRCS staff
Aneka Sweeney, WCD

III. Meeting Called to Order.

Joe Heller, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 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 September 11, 2014 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Nothing has changed on the cost-share topic tabled at the last meeting. It will be postponed until there has been a change in the status.

VI. Financial Report.

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

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant, presented the financial report. There were no questions.

Larry Helm moved to approve the Financial Report. Larry Davis 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:

Sept 14 - balance

Voucher (check) numbers	<u>21831</u>	through	<u>21851</u>	and totaling	<u>13,420.37</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>21852</u>	through	<u>21868</u>	and totaling	<u>30,395.77</u>
October 2014					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>21869</u>	through	<u>21891</u>	and totaling	<u>84,336.71</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>21892</u>	through	<u>21907</u>	and totaling	<u>31,302.36</u>

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

VII. Action Items.

A. Aneka Sweeney.

Aneka is the District's new Education and Outreach Specialist. She gave an interactive presentation on her background, education, philosophy and vision for the outreach program. Aneka was raised in Colorado. She has a BS in Biology, Environmental Restoration, Aquatics with an emphasis on fish and amphibians. She worked for the USDA Forest Service in California. She then obtained her Master's in Education at Western Washington University. Aneka most recently worked at the North Cascades Institute providing environmental education courses to 120 kids per season.

Aneka reported that 250 people participated in the Birch Bay Fun Run. She drafted a grant application to the Department of Ecology National Estuary Protection fund for a community based approach project. George and Aneka explained the grant application.

B. Approval of Conservation Plans.

Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) Conservation Farm Plan Approval –

Chuck Timblin completed an inventory and farm plan for Qihe Mushroom Farm. It fulfilled the requisite elements for that type of plan. Staff recommended Board approval.

Larry Helm moved to approve the Critical Areas Ordinance Conservation Farm Plan for:

- **Qihe Mushroom Farm.**

Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

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) work 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 extraordinary circumstances, the Board approves the standard-language maintenance agreement prescribed by the State Conservation Commission.

There were 3 CREP maintenance contracts submitted for Board approval.

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

- **Donald Anderson & Suzanne Averre – 14-04-CS:14-24**
- **Dan & Susan Bridgman – 14-04-CS:14-17**
- **Eric Jacoby – 14-04-CS:14-18**

Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

C. Election Notification.

Public Notice is required prior to the meeting where the Board will approval the resolution establishing the date and time for the election of a District Supervisor and the appointment of an

election supervisor. The election resolution is scheduled to be approved at the November 13, 2014 Board meeting. Dawn confirmed that there will be a quorum at the November meeting.

D. Staffing.

George reported that Whatcom County is drafting an agreement with the Whatcom Conservation District to deliver technical assistance to livestock owners through its new Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) program. This will probably increase the small farm planner workload. He proposed to re-hire Corina Cheever. Over the past three years she provided administrative assistance and field support to the dairy team, received relevant training including completion of the basic conservation planning from NRCS, written small-farm plans using our standard checklist, and has demonstrated excellent people skills.

George outlined the PIC program. Certain Board members expressed concern over how the initial contacts would be made. The letters that had been sent out in 2008-9 unnecessarily engendered ire in the recipients. George assured the Board that he had reviewed and made comment to the three draft letters. The first two are most respectful. It is only after the landowner has clearly rejected a voluntary path to identify and remedy significant potentials to pollute will they be notified that the matter will be handed off to a Planning and Development Services code enforcement officer if they do not take advantage of one more opportunity to help out. Also, the District will maintain the confidentiality of whatever is seen in the course of an inventory. Reporting will be limited to providing a list of folks the district is working with and an aggregation of Ag BMPs planned for and installed in the watershed. The County has indicated that so long as the landowners are working in good faith, with appropriate speed to address identified problems, they will be left alone.

Larry Davis moved to rehire Corina Cheever as a farm planner at C1 Step1 with the standard benefits starting October 20, 2014. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

E. Open Government Training.

Dawn followed up on the email from the Washington Conservation Commission to have the Board review the open government training videos regarding public disclosure and open public meeting act.

VIII. Other Business.

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

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) –

Alex reported that NRCS staff wrapped up their fiscal year. They obligated 1.6 million last year for 12 contracts.

There will be a new Local Work Group next year. The end of the year contracts are done, so now they are working on making payments and catching up on implementation of practices.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) –

Frank Corey wrote the District's application for funding from the State pot. He received notice that it was one of two from Washington State that advanced to the next level. We should hear about funding status in November 2014.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) [a voluntary program that encourages agricultural and forestry producers to address resource concerns] – Two producers are signed up to re-enroll in the CSP.

Civil Rights and EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) –

Alex reviewed the policies. He will send out electronic copies for the Board and staff to review. This is pursuant to our cooperative agreement with USDA.

B. Supervisor Reports.

Larry Davis –

NW Area meeting – Larry and George attended the NW Area meeting in Carnation. The Whatcom Conservation District was recognized by the Washington State Conservation Commission as the NW Area District of the Year.

Jeff Ellingson, Snohomish CD Supervisor, was elected to a two-year term as Area Director, replacing Bill Knutzen.

Dean Longrie, Clark CD Supervisor, was endorsed by the NW Area attendees as the nominee for election consideration at the December WACD annual meeting in Suncadia.

Five resolutions were considered.

The Conservation Commission's budget package request was discussed. It is important to talk to legislators about eliminating the proposed 15% budget cut and holding the Commission at their current funding level.

Larry Davis moved that the Whatcom Conservation District send a letter to Governor Inslee and our legislators asking to recover the 15% proposed budget cut and fund the entire budget request for the Washington State Conservation Commission. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Larry Helm –

Larry is talking with a lot of people while campaigning to be on the Charter Review Commission. He has noticed that no one seems to know who the Conservation District is. We need to promote the District more.

Ag Advisory Meeting – There was discussion regarding the Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) program at the Ad Advisory meeting. Larry would like Erika Douglas, Whatcom County, to come talk with the Whatcom Conservation District Board about the PIC program and how it is different than the previous CAO program.

Flood Control Funds – There was discussion regarding flood control funds and Whatcom County Council's use of those funds particularly for Engineer Log Jams (ELJs). George explained that use of the funds wasn't legally constrained to providing flood protection which is why stormwater treatment projects were being funded as well. It is a common misunderstanding. Finally, ELJs have been installed regionally for decades. The science and engineering is well understood. They are not as vulnerable to dislodgment as the critics say. George offered to ask Paula Cooper, WC River and Flood Department, to come talk with the Board regarding flood protection on the Nooksack River and projects that are being done.

Joe Heller –

Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) Tour and Meeting – Joe attended the WSCC tour and meeting that was hosted by our District in September. The presentations and field tour given by staff was very impressive. All participants seemed impressed with the producer's comments at the dairy farm.

Shellfish Cost-share Funding – Joe reported that the WSCC staff did approve the ranking of Shellfish Cost-share as was submitted by the Board. They would, however, like to see clustered projects as they believe they show more effect.

C. George Boggs, Executive Director.

Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) meeting – George, Chris Clark and Nichole Embertson attended the NW area CAFO meeting in Yakima. Representatives from State

Departments of Ecology and Agriculture and NRCS for Oregon, Idaho and Washington were in attendance. There was discussion regarding the science behind winter application. It was pointed out that back in Wisconsin “winter” is not a date on the calendar, but a condition of frozen ground and snow.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) – George reported that the Washington State Conservation Commission submitted an application for an NRCS RCPP (Regional Conservation Partnership Program) project for the National pool of funding. It could bring as much as \$4 million in funding to the Puget Sound for listed conservation practices and programs.

Whatcom Clean Water Program – George reported on which creeks that the Department of Ecology would be focusing their efforts in Whatcom County. In response to concerns relayed by some Board members over how Ecology inspectors were conducting inspections and issuing warning letters, notices of corrections and penalties, George suggested that Doug Allen, Department of Ecology be invited to the November meeting to talk with the Board regarding the program. He also mentioned that at the Yakima CAFO meeting, Jerrod Davis, Director of the Office of Shellfish and Water Protection for the State Department of Health, offered to come and talk to the Board about the County PIC program which it was likely to fund. The Board responded that though the offer was appreciated he needn’t travel from Olympia for that purpose. They would like to have Doug come. Larry Helm asked if Erika Douglas could discuss the methodology of water quality bracketing.

Building Remodel – George passed out the latest draft of the building remodel floor plan for the Board to review. The next step is to do a cost analysis. The Board directed George to continue with the process.

Budget – A draft copy of the District’s budget was passed out for Board review and approval at the November meeting.

IX. Record of Board Actions.

14-79 Larry Helm moved that the minutes of the September 11, 2014 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-80 Larry Helm moved to approve the Financial Report. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed. Upon motion made and duly seconded, the Treasurer’s Report was approved.

14-81

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

14-82 Larry Helm moved to approve the Critical Areas Ordinance Conservation Farm Plan for:

- **Qihe Mushroom Farm.**

Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-83 Larry Helm moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contracts provided by Emily Hirsch for:

- **Donald Anderson & Suzanne Averre – 14-04-CS:14-24**
- **Dan & Susan Bridgman – 14-04-CS:14-17**

- Eric Jacoby – 14-04-CS:14-18

Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-84 Larry Davis moved to rehire Corina Cheever as a farm planner at C1 Step1 with the standard benefits starting October 20, 2014. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-85 Larry Davis moved that the Whatcom Conservation District send a letter to Governor Inslee and our legislators asking to recover the 15% proposed budget cut and fund the entire budget request for the Washington State Conservation Commission. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

X. Adjournment.

There being no further business before the meeting, Larry Davis moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 p.m. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting, on motion duly made, seconded and carried, adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Dated: November 19, 2014

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant

Approved: _____