

WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Public Meeting Minutes
July 23, 2015

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 July 23, 2015, at 7:00 p.m.

II. Attendance and Quorum.

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

Larry Davis, Chair
Joe Heller

Dick Yoder, Vice-Chair
Larry Helm

Also in attendance were:

George Boggs, Executive Director
Dawn Bekenyi, Admin. Assistant
Jim Epoch, Landowner

Alex Hall, NRCS staff
Ben Hickey, Landowner
Kevin Berendsen, Landowner

III. Meeting Called to Order.

Larry Davis, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

IV. Public Comment (written or in person).

There were no public comments written or in person.

V. August Board Meeting Date Change.

The Washington State Conservation Commission is having a policy meeting of Supervisor's and staff August 12 & 13, 2015 in Ellensburg. There was discussion about who would attend and moving the August Board meeting to accommodate that meeting. Larry Helm and George will attend. The Board decided to move the August Board meeting to Thursday, August 20, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

VI. CREP 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) 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 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. Emily Hirsch and three landowners were in attendance to talk about their projects and seek Board approval.

Emily provided background on the Hickey CREP project. Mr. Hickey spoke about the property and his agricultural activities, including nut trees and livestock on his land and the habitat improvement provided through the CREP program. Larry Helm asked him some questions about the project. Mr. Hickey also has 100+ blueberry plants. He explained he used to hay the area, but due to drainage issues he is unable to hay the land anymore. It is too wet.

Joe Heller moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contract provided by Emily Hirsch for: Ben Hickey.

Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed. (3 for and 1 abstention.)

Emily described the CREP project and property for Jim Epoch. Mr. Epoch spoke about his project.

Joe Heller moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contract provided by Emily Hirsch for: Jim Epoch.

Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Emily explained the CREP project for Kevin Berendsen. Kevin answered questions regarding productivity and slope on certain areas of the map. Kevin pointed out that the ground dropped off and that it could not be farmed.

Joe Heller moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contract provided by Wayne Chaudiere for: Kevin Berendsen.

Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Fecal Coliform Study Report.

Nichole Embertson introduced Ryan Sarhan (participating via phone), the intern who worked with Nichole last quarter on water quality issues. Ryan put together a report entitled: "Literature Review of Fecal Coliform Source Tracking and its Use in Water Quality Management". He gave a presentation to the Board sharing information that he found during his literature.

VIII. CREP Contracts (continued).

Emily described each project for those participants that were not in attendance.

Joe Heller moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contract provided by Emily Hirsch for: Jim Dailey.

Richard Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed. (3 for and 1 abstention.)

Joe Heller moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contract provided by Emily Hirsch for: Virginia Naef.

Richard Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed. (3 for and 1 opposed.)

Joe Heller moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contract provided by Emily Hirsch for: Darshan Rangi.

Richard Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed. (3 for and 1 opposed.)

IX. Contracts.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) Grant –

Aneka Sweeney wrote and was awarded an ALEA grant to produce a place-based and mobile education tool to increase ecological literacy in schools and community groups by exploring Whatcom County from the mountains to the sea, including freshwater, terrestrial and marine habitats, water cycling, land use impacts and restoration efforts. Using the "rolling rivers" model as a starting point, a trailer mounted interactive display of the Nooksack watershed will become a recognizable feature at many community events and at area schools.

The table will have running water that can be manipulated through "soil" to model stream flows and wetlands. A curriculum will be developed and volunteers trained to use "The Explorer" to better connect citizens with the land, the water and the wildlife of Whatcom County. Kids and adults will enjoy getting their hands dirty manipulating the many features of the model while learning about the watershed and its critical habitats.

Larry Helm moved to approve and sign the WDFW ALEA grant for \$19,250 to produce a mobile education model for Whatcom County. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) Grant Addendums –

On July 16th, the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) adopted allocations to Conservation Districts to accomplish legislatively identified activities. These distributions are made through Addendums to our Master Grant Agreement. The Grant Addendums outline the scope of work for each grant program.

The WSCC will fund the Whatcom Conservation District for the CREP Technical Assistance, Implementation and Livestock Technical Assistance programs. A "Scope of Work" outlining grant activities needs to be approved and submitted by the end of July 2015 for each grant awarded. Drafts were provided for Board review, comment and approval. The draft Scopes of Work are very similar to those for this past fiscal year and reflect activities as outlined in our annual Plan of Work.

Larry Helm moved to approve the Scopes of Work for the CREP TA, Implementation and Livestock TA grants. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

WSCC Cost-share Policy –

On March 21, 2013, the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) adopted a Conservation District Cost Share Policy. The policy directs each conservation district to submit a Board approved resolution to the Conservation Commission, stating the rate of reimbursement for Conservation Commission funds for all NRCS practices. It is to be kept on file with the WSCC and reviewed and updated annually.

Starting July 1, 2015, an annual renewal update has been changed by the Washington State Conservation Commission to set the policy to be effective for the biennium.

Larry Helm move to approve Resolution 15-02 FY16-17 Whatcom Conservation District WSCC Cost-share Policy as drafted. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Basic Allocation –

The Washington State Conservation Commission allows Districts to take up to \$12,500 from their Implementation Grants for Basic Allocation.

Larry Helm moved to authorize the \$12,500 Basic Allocation from the WSCC Implementation Grant for FY16. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Washington Conservation Society –

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Whatcom Conservation District and the Washington Conservation Society (WCS) expired June 30, 2015. We received an email invitation to renew our membership with the Society.

There was discussion regarding the need to annually renew the MOU. It was decided that the District would like to remain a member until such time as the membership fee changes, then the issue would be revisited. A clause was added so that the MOU would remain in effect until there

was a change in the annual fee change, at which time the district would reexamine its membership status.

Larry Helm move to renew the MOU with the Washington Conservation Society and designate Larry Davis as Whatcom Conservation District's representative and pay the annual membership fee of \$150. The MOU shall be in force from July 1, 2015 and will stay in full force until such time as the annual fee changes from \$150 per year or terminated earlier as provided in the MOU. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

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

National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) –

Alex reported that there are seven producers signed up for the NWQI cost-share. Storage is favored for ranking this round. Contract funds need to be obligated by mid-August. The cost cap and rates were explained for both the NWQI and EQIP.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) –

October 16, 2015 is the deadline for sign-up for the EQIP program. This year participants need to have filled out paperwork at the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to show their eligibility at the date of their sign-up.

Cultural Resources –

Alex reported that the NRCS is way behind on doing Cultural Resources Reviews for projects. There is only one person working with 40 offices.

National Review –

Alex told the Board that a group from the national NRCS office would be coming out to the Lynden office to do a Civil Rights Review. They want to speak with one producer and one Conservation District Board member. Larry Davis said that he was available to meet with them.

NRCS Staffing –

The District Conservationist, Tony Sunseri, took a new position in Moscow, Idaho. Alex said that the position was not going to be filled until sometime next year.

The Lynden Field office will be getting a Civil Engineering Tech.

XI. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting.

Larry Helm moved that the minutes of the June 18, 2015 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

XII. Financial Report.

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

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

Joe Heller moved to approve the Financial Report. Larry Helm 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:

June 2015 - balance					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>22670</u>	through	<u>22682</u>	and totaling	<u>64,429.53</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>22683</u>	through	<u>22700</u>	and totaling	<u>32,760.27</u>
July 2015					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>22701</u>	through	<u>22715</u>	and totaling	<u>104,770.01</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>22716</u>	through	<u>22731</u>	and totaling	<u>32,018.72</u>
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>22732</u>	through	<u>22816</u>	and totaling	<u>150,461.27</u>

Moved by Joe Heller. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

XIII. Budget Update.

George reported on the allocations received from the Washington State Conservation Commission for the various grants.

George and Aneka Sweeney met with the City of Lynden Public Works Department regarding entering into a contract with the District to provide the landowner education and outreach efforts for their storm water permit under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES).

XIV. Payroll Step Increase –

George explained that one employee is currently eligible for a step increase effective July 1. George stated that the step increase is appropriate for the employee.

Larry Helm moved to approve the payroll step increase for Nichole Embertson from Band D1 Step 5 to D1 Step 6, effective July 1, 2015. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

XV. Policy Adoption.

Policy Adoption Process –

The draft Policy Adoption Process was submitted for Board review prior to June meeting. The Board reviewed and it was brought up for adoption at the July meeting.

Joe Heller moved to approve the Policy Adoption Process. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Associate Supervisor Policy –

A proposed policy for selecting Associate Supervisors was given to the Board for review. Comments are to be sent to George to incorporate into a final draft for review and adoption at the August 20th Board meeting.

XVI. Other Business.

A. Supervisor Reports.

Larry Helm –

Larry reported that he spoke with the Notebooms, who have served on Farm Service Agency County Oversight Committee. FSA does not have any latitude to deny program participation for any FSA programs.

Larry Davis –

Puget Sound Caucus – The Whatcom Conservation District received three letters from the Puget Sound Caucus seeking support. Dick said that he was not opposed to the survey proposed, but he was concerned about the use of the survey results. Larry Helm was not in support of a CEAP (Conservation Effects Assessments Program) here in Whatcom County. It was decided that the District would send notice of support for the other programs, but not the CEAP letter.

Supervisor Self-Assessment – A supervisor needs assessment form was sent out to all supervisors to be completed by August 31, 2015. Larry D. encouraged all members to participate as it is an opportunity to shape the eventual supervisor leadership development program.

Election and Appointments – New Elections and Appointment Information (2015). A memo and summary addressing proposed policy changes to the conservation district elections and appointments manual and on-line forms was sent out by the Washington State Conservation Commission for public comment. The deadline to provide comment is September 4, 2015. Larry encouraged all members to review the material and provide any feedback directly to the Commission.

B. George Boggs, Executive Director.

Floodplains By Design –

George attended the meeting where the draft guidelines incorporating agriculture were passed out. George said that the draft is lacking a public process and ag industry support to get the ranking points. He suggested that there needs to be ag support or at least County Council support for a meaningful table.

WCD Strategy Sessions with Staff –

George reported that he and staff are working on a Situational Analysis for our Livestock Program to adaptively manage strategies and actions in response to the shellfish closures. The process is in anticipation of the Governor's Results Washington Agenda process coming in October/November.

August Board meeting –

It was reviewed that the August Board meeting is scheduled for August 20, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

There are two draft policies for adoption to be considered at the August meeting: Policy for Associate Supervisors and a Policy Relating to Consent Agendas.

XVII. Record of Board Actions.

15-58 Joe Heller moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contract provided by Emily Hirsch for: Ben Hickey. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed. (3 for and 1 abstention.)

15-59 Joe Heller moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contract provided by Emily Hirsch for: Jim Epoch. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

15-60 Joe Heller moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contract provided by Wayne Chaudiere for: Kevin Berendsen. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

15-61 Joe Heller moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contract provided by Emily Hirsch for: Jim Dailey. Richard Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed. (3 for and 1 abstention.)

15-62 Joe Heller moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contract provided by Emily Hirsch for: Virginia Naef. Richard Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed. (3 for and 1 opposed.)

15-63 Joe Heller moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contract provided by Emily Hirsch for: Darshan Rangji. Richard Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed. (3 for and 1 opposed.)

- 15-64 Larry Helm moved to approve and sign the WDFW ALEA grant for \$19,250 to produce a mobile education model for Whatcom County. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 15-65 Larry Helm moved to approve the Scopes of Work for the CREP TA, Implementation and Livestock TA grants. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 15-66 Larry Helm move to approve Resolution 15-02 FY16-17 Whatcom Conservation District WSCC Cost-share Policy as drafted. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 15-67 Larry Helm moved to authorize the \$12,500 Basic Allocation from the WSCC Implementation Grant for FY16. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 15-68 Larry Helm move to renew the MOU with the Washington Conservation Society and designate Larry Davis as Whatcom Conservation District's representative and pay the annual membership fee of \$150. The MOU shall be in force from July 1, 2015 and will stay in full force until such time as the annual fee changes from \$150 per year or terminated earlier as provided in the MOU. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 15-69 Larry Helm moved that the minutes of the June 18, 2015 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 15-70 Joe Heller moved to approve the Financial Report. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed. Upon motion made and duly seconded, the Treasurer's Report was approved.

15-71

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Moved by Joe Heller. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

- 15-72 Larry Helm moved to approve the payroll step increase for Nichole Embertson from Band D1 Step 5 to D1 Step 6, effective July 1, 2015. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 15-73 Joe Heller moved to approve the Policy Adoption Process. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

XVIII. Adjournment.

There being no further business before the meeting, Dick Yoder moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting, on motion duly made, seconded and carried, adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Dated: August 24, 2015

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant

Approved: _____