

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Public Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2016**

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 8, 2016, at 7:00 p.m.

II. Attendance and Quorum.

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

Larry Helm, Chair
Dan Heeringa, Treasurer
Theresa Sygitowicz

Larry Davis, Vice-Chair
Joe Heller

Also in attendance were:

George Boggs, Executive Director
Dawn Bekenyi, Admin. Assistant

Alex Hall, NRCS staff
Bill LaFreniere

III. Meeting Called to Order.

Larry Helm, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

IV. Public Comment (written or in person).

Bringing "Gardens of the Salish Sea" Curricula into Schools Presentation –

Julie Hirsch gave a presentation regarding the "Gardens of the Salish Sea" program. This is an opportunity for the Whatcom Conservation District to coordinate on this program and expand it to include more agricultural information. Aneka would be the contact to work on this and potential grants. Larry Davis mentioned he still has education contacts at the state level that might be good contacts.

Public Comment –

Bill LaFreniere came to voice his concerns over housing and water and septic issues in rural areas. Mr. LaFreniere has worked to develop a composting septic system. He stated that Whatcom County Planning required blueprints of any septic system designs, which he was reluctant to give due to proprietary design. He was hoping that the Conservation District's opinion may have some weight in the decisions by Whatcom County concerning septic systems. There was no outcome, since Whatcom County is the regulatory agency that sets the rules in this situation.

V. Consent Agenda.

The Board adopted a consent agenda for approval of the previous meeting minutes, financial report and accounts payable. The financial report was mailed to the Board with their draft minutes from the August meeting. Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant, presented the financial report. 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.

Joe Heller moved to approve the consent agenda: minutes of the August 11, 2016 Board meeting as mailed, the financial report and authorize payment of District invoices and incurred expenses (below), as listed in the Accounts Payable Report. The Board further

authorizes the payment of District expenses incurred subject to their review and approval at the next Board meeting. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The following voucher/warrants are approved for payment:

Aug 2016 - balance					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>23986</u>	through	<u>24019</u>	and totaling	<u>55,377.18</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>24021</u>	through	<u>24038</u>	and totaling	<u>37,058.48</u>
September 2016					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>24039</u>	through	<u>24055</u>	and totaling	<u>25,138.63</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>20456</u>	through	<u>24074</u>	and totaling	<u>38,175.92</u>

VI. Action Items.

A. Approval of Conservation Plans.

Dairy Nutrient Management Plan (DNMP) Approval –

There was one Dairy Nutrient Management Plan submitted for Board approval. Staff recommended approval as it contained the necessary elements prescribed by the Conservation Commission and the operator has signed it indicating that it accurately reflects his operation and agrees to its implementation.

Dan Heeringa moved to approve the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for Grace Harbor Farms (David Lukens). Theresa Sygitowicz seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Non-Dairy Farm Plan Approval –

Katie Pencke completed an inventory and Whatcom County standard farm plan for Ten Fold Farms LLC (Tiffany Hudson & Chris Bell). It fulfilled the requisite elements for that type of plan. Staff recommended Board approval.

Joe Heller moved to approve the Whatcom County Standard Farm Plan for Ten Fold Farms LLC (Tiffany Hudson & Chris Bell). Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Ten Fold Farms LLC is seeking cost-share through the County PIC cost-share program.

Larry Davis moved to approve their Whatcom County PIC cost-share application for 75% of expenses, not to exceed \$3,000 for costs incurred after the execution of the cost-share agreement. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Cultural Resources Survey Contract –

As a result of cultural resource consultation with the Tribes and State Department of Archeological and Historic Preservation, an archeological site was identified in very close proximity to the project site. The Farm Service Agency has requested a cultural resource survey for the site in a response to Tribal concerns.

Three bids have been obtained from Archeological contractors. The lowest bid is \$2,880. CREP funding for the survey is available from and approved by the Conservation Commission staff.

Larry Davis moved to approve the cultural resource survey contract for a CREP Project for \$2,880. Theresa Sygitowicz 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. A District resource specialist (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 stated that property rights outweigh any potential concerns he may have regarding loss of farmland or CREP projects. Landowners should be allowed to do what they wish with their property. He will approve CREP contracts.

Theresa voiced concerns regarding beaver activity in the Bertrand Watershed. Larry Helm mentioned that varmint control is part of the CREP contracts. It was decided that staff would talk to the impacted parties regarding any beaver activity in the area.

Larry Davis moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contracts provided by Wayne Chaudiere for: Steve & Page Chance; Cougar Creek Ranch, LLC; Susan Hoban; Steve & Liz Jensen; Ramon Llanos; and James Lourie. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Contracts.

Sub-agreement with Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) for Services in Support of Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) funding from NRCS –

The District was awarded a Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) contract through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in the spring of 2016. This makes Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) funding available to willing landowners for voluntary habitat improvement projects in Whatcom County.

Specifically the funding will be available for the farmers or foresters to replace stream crossings that are barriers to fish passage and also to construct engineered log jams. Culverts blocking fish passage are typically undersized and in deteriorating condition. Replacing the structures with much larger culverts or bridges provide much safer crossings with improved drainage and flood conveyance. Log jam construction typically stabilizes river banks to protect farmland from erosion as well as creating improved fish habitat. These projects have been modeled to ensure that they do not cause flooding.

The District applied for this funding in partnership with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). WDFW will provide technical assistance to assess culverts and habitat and to engineer new stream crossings. The award includes both direct funding to participating landowners and technical assistance allocations for the District and WDFW staff. An agreement is needed between the District and WDFW to implement this project.

There was discussion regarding the proposal. The Board is agreeable to the fish passage culvert replacement work and bank stabilization, but concerned about any log jams. George offered to invite Frank to the next meeting to discuss. The topic was postponed until the next meeting.

RCPP Advanced Waste Treatment Practices Project – WSCC –

The District applied for a grant to partner with the Washington State Conservation Commission and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) to fund a new conservation practice. If the practice is approved in Washington State and grant funded, new technology could be piloted on dairies. It takes separated liquid manure and processes it into potable water, aqua ammonia fertilizer, and ash rich in phosphate and potassium.

The Washington State Conservation Commission approved funding for technical assistance to implement the proposed Advanced Waste Treatment Practices project application. For administrative purposes the project has been funded through two separate RCPP grant addendums, \$50,000 – state funds and \$20,000 federal funds.

The Commission requires Board approval of grant addendums.

Larry Davis moved to approve the grant addendums RCPP Program Addendum Grant #16-04-RC (Federal TA) and #17-04-RP (state). Theresa Sygitowicz seconded the motion. The motion passed.

C. Travel Policy.

The draft travel policy Theresa drafted was distributed to the Board for review. Larry Davis did not feel that all travel should be reviewed by the Board. Larry Helm would like to know when staff is out of the state. If staff are doing to participate in a program, it would be good to know if they are traveling out of the state. The Board asked for a calendar to track when staff are traveling out of the state. The travel policy was postponed to the next meeting.

VII. Other Business.

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

National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) –

Four additional NWQI applications were funded. There are three additional fish passage projects.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) –

Three more Edge of Field projects will be funded by the end of Fiscal Year. NRCS staff are still contracting. After, contracting they will need to get caught up with implementation of projects. Need to work on expiring contracts. Next EQIP sign up with probably be in November. Start all over again.

The Local Work Group (LWG) meeting is coming up soon, probably in November.

B. Supervisor Reports.

Theresa Sygitowicz –

Theresa requested a letter of apology from the Department of Ecology for comments that they made that the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) meeting following representatives attending the Whatcom Conservation District Board meeting in July. Larry Helm received a letter from the WSCC inviting the Board to attend their next WSCC Board meeting. Larry Helm did not know what was in their minutes regarding the incident. Larry Helm and George will attend the WSCC meeting in Friday Harbor. The Board asked George to request a copy of the WSCC minutes regarding the passage about the Whatcom Conservation District.

Larry Davis –

Larry Davis is on the Commission's Good Governance (renamed Conservation Accountability and Performance Program) Committee. They are revising the current Good Governance system. A draft will be presented at the WSCC meeting the following week. He reviewed some of the potential changes to the system.

Dan Heeringa –

Dan attended the Janicki tour. He was very impressed with their facility in Skagit County and the process.

Larry Helm –

Larry Helm has spent some time making comments on Whatcom County's Comprehensive Plan on the farm issues.

Larry Davis and Larry Helm met with staff regarding a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). He stated that there did not appear to be any negatives. The increase would come out of the grants. Larry Davis would like to meet with George, Dawn, Frank and Andrew to make it work. Larry Helm would like to get the COLA in place no later than January. Chris mentioned Engineer class needs to be looked at.

C. George Boggs, Executive Director.

Budget – George gave the Board a presentation of funding for Fiscal Year 2017 (July 2016 – June 2017). He reviewed how the grants cycle and that the Conservation District needs to continue to seek funds to continue our work.

Lake Whatcom Homeowners Incentive Program – George met with the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County on Lake Whatcom Homeowners Incentive Program. It is a voluntary incentive program. The program will provide cost-share per acreage cost to install practices that will address run-off. George reviewed how the cost-share would work. They would like the Conservation District to work as their Whatcom County Agent on this program. It would provide funding for a full-time person for two years. Theresa and Larry Helm voiced concerns about getting involved in this project. They feel that is a no-win situation. Larry Davis noted that the Conservation District would only be working with landowners on a voluntary basis. There was discussion regarding the activities of the Conservation District and what are the programs in Whatcom County and the cities. The community has voiced concerns about the phosphorus issue in Lake Whatcom. There was discussion regarding seeking a Rate and Charge as a way to get funding. The Whatcom Conservation District will need to work in the City of Bellingham to provide a service that could show the need for a Rate and Charge.

Larry Davis moved that the Whatcom Conservation District enter into an agreement with the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County on the Lake Whatcom project for the Homeowner Incentive Program to provide work on a voluntary basis. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed. (3-2)

Larry Helm would like a presentation from Whatcom County and the City of Bellingham on this project. The scope of work will be brought back to the Board for review and approval.

Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) – The WSDA has funds again this year for the Whatcom Conservation District to provide Nutrient Management Training sessions for Dairy Farms.

Dan Heeringa moved to approve the Nutrient Management Training contract with the Washington State Department of Agriculture. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Enduris – George and Dawn met with a representative from Enduris. George shared that there is some identify fraud protection that is provided free to all Board members.

George discussed farm tours and liability issues. Joanne was positive about farm tours with children and additional insured on farms. The matter is being passed on to their Risk Manager to provide further information.

Long Range Program – The draft 5-year Long Range Program has been posted on the Whatcom Conservation District website. George also sent a press release to all the papers and other outreach agencies.

WSDA Berry/Dairy Planner – Matt Arrington was hired for the short-term position. Matt has been working with berry growers.

VIII. Record of Board Actions.

- 16-60 Joe Heller moved to approve the consent agenda: minutes of the August 11, 2016 Board meeting as mailed, the financial report and authorize payment of District invoices and incurred expenses (below), as listed in the Accounts Payable Report. The Board further authorizes the payment of District expenses incurred subject to their review and approval at the next Board meeting. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

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- 16-61 Dan Heeringa moved to approve the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for Grace Harbor Farms (David Lukens). Theresa Sygitowicz seconded the motion. The motion passed.**
- 16-62 Joe Heller moved to approve the Whatcom County Standard Farm Plan for Ten Fold Farms LLC (Tiffany Hudson & Chris Bell). Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**
- 16-63 Larry Davis moved to approve their Whatcom County PIC cost-share application for 75% of expenses, not to exceed \$3,000 for costs incurred after the execution of the cost-share agreement. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.**
- 16-64 Larry Davis moved to approve the cultural resource survey contract for a CREP Project for \$2,880. Theresa Sygitowicz seconded the motion. The motion passed.**
- 16-65 Larry Davis moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contracts provided by Wayne Chaudiere for: Steve & Page Chance; Cougar Creek Ranch, LLC; Susan Hoban; Steve & Liz Jensen; Ramon Llanos; and James Lourie. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**
- 16-66 Larry Davis moved to approve the grant addendums RCPP Program Addendum Grant #16-04-RC (Federal TA) and #17-04-RP (state). Theresa Sygitowicz seconded the motion. The motion passed.**
- 16-67 Larry Davis moved that the Whatcom Conservation District enter into an agreement with the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County on the Lake Whatcom project for the Homeowner Incentive Program to provide work on a voluntary basis. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed. (3-2)**
- 16-68 Dan Heeringa moved to approve the Nutrient Management Training contract with the Washington State Department of Agriculture. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

IX. Adjournment.

There being no further business before the meeting, Larry Helm adjourned the meeting at 9:55 p.m.

Dated: October 31, 2016

Approved: _____

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant