

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
Public Meeting Minutes  
November 10, 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 November 10, 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  
Frank Corey, Resource Coordinator  
Roger Blok, dairy farmer

Alex Hall, NRCS staff  
Corina Cheever, Resource Specialist  
Doug Allen, Wa St Dept of Ecology  
G David Bock, MBBA, WCCF & Citizens

**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).**

Roger Blok, dairy farmer. In February Roger had asked for an update to his Dairy Nutrient Management Plan. At that time, staff mentioned their heavy workload and that it was unknown when he could get a plan update. George suggested that Roger come and talk to the Board. Roger wants to be proactive and do what is right. George explained that the District has a list of 40+ people that have asked for an update to their Dairy Plans. Since there is more work than people to do it, requests were ranked according to a Board set prioritization scheme. New dairies and those receiving cost-share funding to fix identified problems are given priority. These absorbed the available technical assistance. Theresa asked if it would help Roger and other producers to have a letter in his binder explaining that he made the request, but that due to lack of funds he has not gotten the update. This shows that he has been proactive in asking. The short-coming is not on his part. Alex suggested that producers can sign up with NRCS to get a nutrient management plan, which may help. There was discussion regarding potential funding alternatives for planners.

**Theresa Sygitowicz moved that the Executive Director write a letter to those farmers that are on the waiting list for a farm plan update explaining the delay due to lack of staffing and funds. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**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 October 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.

**Larry Davis moved to approve the consent agenda: minutes of the October 20, 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. Theresa Sygitowicz seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

The following voucher/warrants are approved for payment:

Oct 2016 - balance					
Voucher (check) numbers	24165	through	24173	and totaling	8,608.25
Payroll check numbers:	24174	through	24192	and totaling	38,258.35
November 2016					
Voucher (check) numbers	24193	through	24243	and totaling	145,842.27
Payroll check numbers:	24244	through	24264	and totaling	38,916.35

**VI. Presentations.**

**Doug Allen, Department of Ecology.**

Doug talked about the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that Ecology and the Whatcom Conservation District is working on that will help direct both agencies on how referrals will be handled and how the agencies will work together. Doug would like to have a strong partnership between Ecology and the Whatcom Conservation District. He suggested setting up regular times throughout the year to come and update the Board on how things were going. This would give both agencies a better chance to communicate. Larry Helm reported that the Washington State Conservation Commission has facilitated two meetings to start MOU discussions. There is a pretty good conceptual framework for an MOU. Doug wanted to encourage the Conservation District to continue with the MOU process. Joe Heller voiced the concern that communication to the public has been a problem in the past. Doug would like to see a better coordinated education program. George passed out the latest draft of District services. Larry Davis agreed that both agencies providing more communication is better. The first contact is very important. Doug will review the District handout with his staff. There was discussion regarding Ecology's enforcement steps. Theresa Sygitowicz expressed the strong desire that Ecology makes sure that people know that the Conservation District is not a part of Ecology. The District can help you with a plan, but we are not the only people with whom you can work. It was mentioned that Ecology should provide a disclaimer to landowners. Doug explained the steps of enforcement. Doug stated that if people were cooperating with Ecology, then Ecology would continue to work with them before seeking enforcement or fines.

**Corina Cheever, PIC Livestock Program.**

Corina gave a presentation on updates to the Whatcom Conservation District website and PIC and outreach programs. The Board felt the need to inform the County Council that we are making good progress. They suggested that Corina and the District should make a presentation to the Council or the Natural Resources Committee regarding the program accomplishments to date.

**VII. Action Items.**

**A. Approval of Conservation Plans.**

Dairy Nutrient Management Plan (DNMP) Certification –

Chuck Timblin reviewed the plan for Grace Harbor Farms and recommended that the Board certify it. It met the applicable requirements for certification and the producer certified that he was managing accordingly.

**Joe Heller moved to certify the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for Grace Harbor Farms. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**B. Information to Develop the Process to Create RCPP Ranking Criteria.**

The District contracted with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to deliver a Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). Most of the project funding is allocated toward projects on private land to improve fish passage. Generally this involves replacing an undersized or failing culvert with a larger culvert or bridge.

Staff plan to solicit applications for fish passage improvements through February 17th, 2017. A later sign up period will be developed in 2017 for instream wood structures. This current sign up and ranking process will be limited to fish passage.

The Board was sent a proposed ranking process and work plan diagram to illustrate the process required to develop a ranking criteria, leading eventually to on-the-ground projects with individual landowners. A separate process will develop ranking criteria for an engineered log jam as per the prior commitments to the Board. Also attached is an NRCS ranking form from a similar solicitation done earlier in 2016.

**Larry Davis moved to approve the ranking process necessary to implement the Regional Conservation Partnership Program entitled “WRIA 1 Salmon Recovery & Water Quality Improvement Project.” Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**C. 2017 Plant Budget Approval.**

Emily Hirsch provided the Board with a draft budget for the 2017 plant sale, which was developed using either historical or actual costs.

**Larry Helm moved to approve the proposed 2017 Plant Sale Budget. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**D. Election Resolution.**

A conservation district must hold a Supervisor election each year. The purpose of the Notice of the Adopted Election Resolution is to inform the public, voters and potential candidates of the date, time, place and manner of the election. The district must work within a strict framework of deadlines prescribed by the Washington State Conservation Commission.

**Larry Davis moved to adopt the election resolution as follows:**

- **The poll site election will be held at the District office, 6975 Hannegan Road, Lynden, WA**
- **The election will be on Tuesday, March 14, 2017**
- **Polls will be open from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm**
- **Board selected Dawn Bekenyi as Election Supervisor**
- **Additionally, the District will have a mail-in election with ballot distribution by requests.**
- **Candidate filing deadline is January 27, 2017 at 4:00 pm.**
- **The last day to request an absentee ballot is February 14, 2017 at 4:00 pm.**

**Theresa Sygitowicz seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**VIII. Other Business.**

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

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) –

The deadline for EQIP sign-ups is next Friday, November 18, 2016. NRCS has 40-50 people showing interest. New people will need all of their paperwork in place. Sign-ups are for Local

Work Group and state initiatives. The National Water Quality Incentive (NWQI) will be a separate sign-up. That will happen soon.

The Tenmile Watershed will be added to the current NWQI area currently comprised of Fishtrap, Bertrand, Kamm and Scott Ditch drainages. What's different is that NRCS will have Conservation Technical Assistance funding to complete a watershed assessment. NRCS anticipates a full year of planning work to be done under this pilot program. Part of the process is outreach. There was discussion regarding how to get the word out.

Technical Service Provider (TSP) –

NRCS and the Whatcom Conservation District are working on developing a new TSP Task Order to be in place by the end of the calendar year to continue engineering and technical assistance from, respectively, Chris Clark and Frank Corey.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP) –

There is ongoing discussion with Frank Corey and Chris Clark regarding the two RCP projects. Federal agencies have to meet Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) standards. They cannot fund a project that will not fit those standards. Theresa Sygitowicz voiced concerns about dikes in Whatcom County and the County Flood Fund. Alex reported that NRCS does not have a role in County dike maintenance, since there are jurisdictional issues. NRCS will put in a floodgate on the Appel property. Everything that NRCS does is initiated by voluntary application for programs.

**B. Supervisor Reports.**

Larry Helm –

Larry reported that local beef prices are low. The milk price is not very good. It is a very warm year. Buffer fencing is up and the grass is growing, cows like it.

Larry Helm is working on the MOU with Ecology. Shana Joy and Ron Shultz from the Washington State Conservation Commission, Kelly Susewind from Washington Department of Ecology, Chuck Timblin, Whatcom Conservation District and Larry Helm were at the last meeting.

Larry is working with insurance agencies to get school kids to attend events at farms. George reported that he talked with our Enduris insurance risk manager. If we sponsor a tour or event we can get liability coverage for the farmer.

There are 123 pages for the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO). Larry Helm suggested that the Board review the proposed CAO draft. George will try to get a copy and send to the Board for review. There was discussion about forming a workgroup to provide comments.

At the last Ag Advisory Committee meeting they brought out their 5 year plan.

Larry Davis –

WACD – attended the North East and South East area meetings. There was one resolution passed at each. The WACD Board adopted a new vision for the association. Larry Davis discussed the proposed changes to the WACD bylaws and resolutions and how the process works at the annual meeting. There was discussion that Conservation Districts should receive copies of the Resolutions to be discussed at the WACD Annual Meeting by Nov 1<sup>st</sup> each year.

Larry reported that the Washington State Conservation Commission is working on an upgrade of the Good Governance requirements, including developing a voluntary option for self-assessment of performance standards.

Theresa Sygitowicz –

Theresa reported that the Washington State Cattlemen Association had a table at Snohomish Ag Expo. The event was well attended by around 300 people. There were 50 different vendors and

tables at the Expo. Theresa said that Snohomish has a person that responds to the County to make sure that nothing is passed that is detrimental to the farming community.

**C. George Boggs, Executive Director.**

Long Range Program –

The Board opted to postpone discussion of the Long Range Program and set a special meeting on November 21, 2016 from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm. This will allow for more public comments to come in. During the special meeting the Board will discuss the Long Range Program and Resolutions to be voted on at the Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) annual meeting.

**IX. Record of Board Actions.**

**16-83 Theresa Sygitowicz moved that the Executive Director write a letter to those farmers that are on the waiting list for a farm plan update explaining the delay due to lack of staffing and funds. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**16-84 Larry Davis moved to approve the consent agenda: minutes of the October 20, 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. Theresa Sygitowicz seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

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  - Candidate filing deadline is January 27, 2017 at 4:00 pm.
  - The last day to request an absentee ballot is February 14, 2017 at 4:00 pm.

**Theresa Sygitowicz seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**X. Adjournment.**

**There being no further business before the meeting, Joe Heller moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:31 p.m. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

The meeting, on motion duly made, seconded and carried, adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

Dated: February 2, 2017

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

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Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant