

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Public Meeting Minutes
August 9, 2006**

I. Time and Place of Meeting.

A regular meeting of the Board of Supervisor of the Whatcom Conservation District was held at the Ag Service Center, 6975 Hannegan Rd, Lynden, Washington on August 9, 2006, at 12:15 p.m.

II. Attendance and Quorum.

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jerry Van Dellen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dick Yoder
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sabina Gouran	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Joyce Jimerson
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ed Stone		

Also in attendance were:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	George Boggs, District Manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	John Gillies, NRCS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dawn Bekenyi, Admin. Assistant		Bas Scholten, Associate Supervisor
	Robert Barker, Associate Supervisor		Chuck Timblin, WCD Technician
	Wayne Chaudiere, WCD Technician		Joy Hawley, NRCS
	Rob Horgen, Whatcom Grange		Larry Helm, Landowner

III. Meeting Called to Order.

Jerry Van Dellen as Chairman of the meeting called it to order at 12:13 p.m.

IV. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting.

Sabina Gouran moved that the minutes of the July 12, 2006 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

V. Financial Report.

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

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant, asked if there were any questions regarding the Financial Report. There were no questions.

Dick Yoder moved to approve the Financial Report. Sabina Gouran 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:

July 2006 - balance
Voucher (check) numbers 14243 through 14311 and totaling 88,430.29

Payroll check numbers:	<u>14312</u>	through	<u>14323</u>	and totaling	<u>16,744.71</u>
August 2006					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>14324</u>	through	<u>14341</u>	and totaling	<u>18,981.77</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>14342</u>	through	<u>14353</u>	and totaling	<u>16,697.67</u>
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>14354</u>	through	<u>14355</u>	and totaling	<u>3,724.64</u>

moved by Dick Yoder. Sabina Gouran seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VI. Action Items.

A. Approval of Contracts.

CREP Cultural Resources Assessments –

There is one CREP applicant that needs to have cultural resource assessment done on their proposed project. The District sends out requests for bids to a list of certified archeologists. From those that respond the District selects the lowest bidder. The District enters into an agreement for the cultural resource assessment with the contractor. The contract for the Karl Seck CREP project was presented to the Board for approval.

George reviewed the CREP Cultural Resources Assessment process. A copy of the Cultural Resources contract was mailed to the Board for review prior to the meeting. George reported that there have been no “finds” on any projects to date. It was pointed out that even if the Assessment came back stating that it was unlikely that a cultural resource would be found, work on the project would stop if anything was found.

Sabina Gouran moved to approve the Cultural Resource Assessment contract with Drayton Archeological Research LLC (Garth Baldwin) for the Karl Seck CREP project in the amount of \$2,784.88. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

CREP contracts –

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) is the administrative lead on the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) joint program. The FSA County Committee approves all plans. The current policy is that once FSA approves the Federal Contract and CREP plan the contract is then brought to the Board meeting for ratification. As per the current policy, the Board approved three contracts.

Maps of the projects were passed out for review.

Dick Yoder moved to ratify the CREP contracts for Robert Barr (06-04-CR01:06-13), Frank DeFreytas (06-04-CR01:06-18) and Countryside Dairy (Mike Schoneveld) (06-04-CR01:06-06). Sabina Gouran seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Pioneers In Conservation –

The second sub-contract for the Pioneers in Conservation projects was signed as per prior approval and brought to the Board for ratification. The contract is with D & L Sorenson Construction for excavation work not to exceed \$12,000 plus \$1,000 for materials with prior approval from District staff.

Sabina Gouran moved to ratify the contract with D & L Sorenson Construction Inc not to exceed \$12,000 plus \$1,000 for materials with prior approval from District staff. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Whatcom Community College Work Study –

Interns can be placed in our office through the work-study contract agreement with the Whatcom Community College at a 75% reimbursement from the college. The District renewed the contract.

Sabina Gouran authorized the Whatcom Conservation District to sign a work-study contract with the Whatcom Community College. Joyce Jimerson seconded the motion. The motion passed.

B. WACD Dues.

The District received a notice stating that our annual Washington Association of Conservation Districts dues for 2006 are \$4,200 with \$10 for each Associate Supervisor.

Sabina Gouran moved to authorize payment of the WACD annual dues in the amount of \$4,220. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

C. Approval of Farm Plans.

Under the new tax exempt laws available for livestock operations, two farm plans were presented to the Board for approval. Matt Eldridge is a heifer operation and Yoricka Farms is a beef operation.

Ed Stone moved to approve the farm plans for Matt Eldridge and Dick Yoder (Yoricka Farms). Sabina Gouran seconded the motion. The motion passed. (Dick abstained from vote on his farm plan.)

VII. Other Business.

A. Supervisor Reports.

Joyce Jimerson –

Joyce saw the movie, “An Inconvenient Truth” in Mt. Vernon where they had the panel discussion following the viewing. She told the Board some of the things the panel said.

Ed Stone –

Ed informed the Board that a developer proposed adding an “acceleration lane” on the Everson Goshen Road that would impact the Stone’s CREP buffer. The developer would like to fill in the land adjacent to the proposed acceleration lane. Ed requested a non-committal letter from the Whatcom Conservation District informing all interested parties about the CREP wetland restoration projects that exist in this area. The Board directed George to write a letter stating the facts of the wetland projects without taking sides on the issue.

B. George Boggs.

Employee Security Checks –

George informed the Board that all permanent District staff needs to get fingerprinted and have a security check done in order to be collocated with the USDA NRCS and FSA. There was discussion regarding the need for security checks for temporary employees or interns. NRCS stated that these people are not unsupervised, so therefore would not need to go through the security check. Some Board members felt a security check on all employees and even Board members would be a good idea. There was a question regarding to the costs attributed to additional security checks. George will check into it and suggest a course of action regarding security checks for temporary employees, interns or the Board.

C. Larry Helm & Rob Horgen, Whatcom County Grange.

Land Development and Farm Plans –

Rob Horgen is the President of the Whatcom County Pomona Grange.

Larry Helm received a copy of the draft Farm Plan Workbook that had been distributed for comments. Rob and Larry have some concerns about the information in the workbook and the impact on 4-H kids and small landowners. They were concerned that the workbook may be overly burdensome and discourage 4-H participants from owning livestock, as well as small landowners. George reviewed Whatcom County’s Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) and addressed Rob’s concerns. George gave some background on the changes from the old CAO to the new 2005 CAO. Concerned citizens would have to talk with Whatcom County regarding

thresholds on farms. George informed them that the planning tiers and degree of hardship for a landowner would be a mitigating factor. George reviewed the livestock survey that the Conservation District had done showing the number of non-commercial livestock in the County. If all landowners were allowed to pollute just a little, it would culminate into a large impact on the environment.

Larry Helm said that there is a lot of helpful information provided by the Conservation District. He informed the Board that he received a Notice of Violation of the County's Critical Areas Ordinance and was working with Chris Clark. The letter from the County was very poorly written. The County responded to a complaint. Larry was concerned about the County driving past other visible problems to get to complaints, which may not be as large an impact. Larry would like to see a definition of a "small farm." Again the notion of someone with a few acres and one or two animals was brought up as not needing to control pollution. He was concerned that regulations were impacting youth involvement in 4-H.

George reviewed some potential solutions to Larry and Rob's concerns. He pointed out that the water quality goals for a watershed basin is not zero. A basin approach to planning is one way to address water quality and farm planning. They are trying this approach in the Bertrand Creek watershed. It was also pointed out that the 50 foot buffer is not a "no touch" zone, it is a managed buffer.

Larry suggested that Whatcom County needed to send out enforcement for environmental concerns not just respond to complaints. Larry and Rob speaking for the Grange requested that the Conservation District tell Whatcom County to not ignore problems that they see to get to complaints. County representatives should stop at the problems noticed along the way too.

Chris Clark voiced concerns that such a statement would make it appear that the Conservation District was pushing enforcement on landowners.

The District will step up workshops and offer information to landowners. Rob offered to have the Granges partner with the Conservation District on small farm issues. George will follow up with the grange representatives and Shellfish District representatives to work on a pro-active approach to small farm issues.

D. CREP Project Maintenance.

Chuck Timblin and Wayne Chaudiere reviewed the blackberry and thistle issues on CREP projects. They suggested that the Board request the WA Conservation Commission readdress the CREP maintenance limits. Bob Barker wanted to make sure that the invasive plants were inhibiting the growth of the trees and were not just cosmetic. Chuck informed him that the weeds are effecting the growth of the trees. Chuck and Wayne also suggested that making other practices, such as cover crops eligible would help eliminate weeds. After reviewing the projects that have been maintained since the CREP maintenance cap was installed, it is apparent that \$1,500 per acre was too conservative for maintenance needs and we need to contemplate making a recommendation for an increase to the base maintenance rate to the WA Conservation Commission. Well over 50% of the projects in Whatcom County are over the maintenance cap as per the maintenance policy. Wayne suggested that \$2,000 per acre would be closer to the amount of maintenance needed for each project. Other items that need to be reviewed would be the grass/cover crop and thinning of projects. Wayne and Chuck would like to take the Board on a tour of the CREP projects to discuss plant survival and maintenance issues. Chuck got a cost estimate for the cover crop seed mix for approximately \$60 per acre.

After some discussion it was decided to distill the report into some recommendations to be forwarded to the WA Conservation Commission and CREP committee.

The issues that need to be addressed are Beaver control, tree thinning on older projects, and invasive plant species. Wayne and Chuck requested some Board input on compiling the recommendations.

E. George Boggs.

WA Conservation Commission –

George informed the Board that the next WA Conservation Commission meeting will be in Coupeville on September 21 with a tour the day before on September 20. He recommended that any Board members that could attend should since the meeting is so close.

NRCS workload –

At the recent EQIP Local Work Group meeting NRCS showed concern for projects that needs Cultural Resource Assessment and Engineering. NRCS is trying to do more work with fewer people. The Whatcom Conservation District and NRCS Lynden Field Office appreciate all the work that Joy Hawley has done. We just received word that her position was extended. George voiced his concerns over the huge workload in Whatcom County and the dwindling NRCS staff. John Gillies will be retiring at the end of the year. The Board directed George to write a letter requesting that John’s position be filled in a timely manner.

Public Outreach –

Commission Solomon attended a riparian buffer tour of Whatcom and Skagit counties. She invited George and Carolyn Kelly, Skagit Conservation District manager, to attend the Fish and Wildlife Commission’s meeting to discuss hedgerows and wetlands. The Commission was impressed with our efforts working with drainage improvement districts to install hedgerows.

District Funding –

George was on KVOs TV and also spoke with Cal Bratt of the Lynden Tribune regarding the Conservation District’s funding.

George was on the IAC grant review committee. It appears that the IAC will be receiving funding for the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program and other Riparian programs.

VIII. Record of Board Actions.

06-43 Sabina Gouran moved that the minutes of the July 12, 2006 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

06-44 Dick Yoder moved to approve the Financial Report. Sabina Gouran seconded the motion. The motion passed. Upon motion made and duly seconded, the Treasurer’s Report was approved.

06-45

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moved by Dick Yoder. Sabina Gouran seconded the motion. The motion passed.

06-46 Sabina Gouran moved to approve the Cultural Resource Assessment contract with Drayton Archeological Research LLC (Garth Baldwin) for the Karl Seck CREP project in the amount of \$2,784.88. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

- 06-47 Dick Yoder moved to ratify the CREP contracts for Robert Barr (06-04-CR01:06-13), Frank DeFreytas (06-04-CR01:06-18) and Countryside Dairy (Mike Schoneveld) (06-04-CR01:06-06). Sabina Gouran seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 06-48 Sabina Gouran moved to ratify the contract with D & L Sorenson Construction Inc not to exceed \$12,000 plus \$1,000 for materials with prior approval from District staff. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 06-49 Sabina Gouran authorized the Whatcom Conservation District to sign a work-study contract with the Whatcom Community College. Joyce Jimerson seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 06-50 Sabina Gouran moved to authorize payment of the WACD annual dues in the amount of \$4,220. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 06-51 Ed Stone moved to approve the farm plans for Matt Eldridge and Dick Yoder (Yoricka Farms). Sabina Gouran seconded the motion. The motion passed. (Dick abstained from vote on his farm plan.)

IX. Adjournment.

There being no further business before the meeting, Sabina Gouran moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:33 p.m. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting on motion duly made, seconded and carried, adjourned at 2:33 p.m.

Dated: September 26, 2006

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant

Approved: _____