

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Public Meeting Minutes
February 10, 2010**

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 February 10, 2010, at 7:00 p.m.

II. Attendance and Quorum.

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

Dick Yoder	Ed Stone
Joe Heller	Larry Davis
Terry Lenssen	

Also in attendance were:

George Boggs, District Manager	Alex Hall, NRCS staff
Dawn Bekenyi, Admin. Assistant	

III. Meeting Called to Order.

Dick Yoder, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

IV. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting.

Larry Davis moved that the minutes of the January 13, 2010 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

V. Financial Report.

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

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

Joe Heller 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:

Jan 2010 - balance					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>17466</u>	through	<u>17480</u>	and totaling	<u>139,101.97</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>17481</u>	through	<u>17497</u>	and totaling	<u>27,689.92</u>
February 2010					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>17498</u>	through	<u>17512</u>	and totaling	<u>3,159.85</u>

Payroll check numbers: 17513 through 17526 and totaling 27,424.23
Moved by Joe Heller. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VI. Action Items.

A. Approval of Conservation Plans.

Livestock Nutrient Management Plan (LNMP) Approval –

There was one Livestock Nutrient Management Plans submitted for Board approval.

Terry Lenssen moved to approve the Livestock Nutrient Management Plans for TJ Veen Acres (John Vander Veen). Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

B. Approval of Contracts.

Purchase Government Surplus contract update –

The State of Washington Department of General Administration sent a request to update our current eligible shopper designee under the federal and state purchasing programs. The Board authorized George Boggs to continue as designated eligible shopper for the District.

Larry Davis moved to authorize George Boggs as the designated representative for purchases for federal and state surplus property and sign the necessary paperwork. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VII. Other Business.

A. Supervisor Election.

Dawn reminded everyone that the Supervisor Election is scheduled for March 9, 2010. Only one candidate filed by the deadline.

B. Supervisor Reports.

Larry Davis –

Larry and George attended the Local Work Group (LWG) Chairs and State Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting in Ellensburg on February 9, 2010. The annual Local Work Group meeting will be schedule for latter April.

Larry joined the Washington Conservation Society (a non-profit formed by the Washington Association of Conservation Districts).

Terry Lenssen –

Representatives from the local Dairy Federation met with the county Flood Control Zone staff to discuss river corridor sediment removal. They are brainstorming ideas on how to address the sediment build-up. An ad hoc committee may be set up to address the issue. The Dairy Federation is ready to engage in the process. They hope to get the tribes and County to support this proactive approach.

Dick Yoder –

Dick reported that there are an estimated 20,000 wild horse in Washington, Oregon and Idaho. They have been let loose on range land and are causing a great deal of environmental damage. The tribes are supportive of cattlemen efforts to fix the problem of horses, forage and the landscape.

George Boggs –

George met with Paula Cooper, Whatcom County River and Flood Division of Public Works, and Ron Bronsema, Chair of the Flood Control Zone District Advisory Committee, last Friday. George explained the structure of committees under the County government and Flood Control Zone District. He also discussed the possible make-up of an ad hoc committee to address the

sediment in the Nooksack River. The ad hoc committee would be a sounding board for the executive committee, which would allow the group to engage with the tribes. They could get resources and ask the state for changes in administration. The group is looking at proof of the concept showing BMPs, effectiveness, and efficiencies, including the creation of fish habitat. Next week the group should have another meeting to select the ad hoc committee members.

Bob Kelly, Nooksack Tribe, met with the preliminary group today. He said he would like to keep farmers in the community. Bob would like to see the group thinking outside of the box in addressing flooding issues in the Nooksack River. He hopes that both groups can get what they need out of the process, riparian area improvements, water storage and water rights for irrigation. He would support the Nooksack Tribe's participation in the process.

Ed Stone –

Ed shared that there are some personal issues that will impede his ability to serve on the Board. He can attend Board meetings, but would not be able to offer any other time. The Board expressed their appreciation for what he can do and the years of service that he has given the Conservation District to this date. They did not want to entertain replacing him, if he could still attend board meetings.

Ed and Terry said that they heard about the Whatcom Conservation District receiving District of the Year on KGMI and KISM in the "Upside Report." George explained that he had passed the information on to someone that works at the radio stations and they had put it on the air.

Dick Yoder –

Dick reported that Nichole Embertson attended the Ag Advisory Committee where she gave a presentation. It was very well attended and Nichole handled herself well in a contentious situation. Chuck Antholt contacted George and informed him that Nichole did a very good job at the committee meeting. It points out that we should connect more with the public on issues.

C. Alex Hall, Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS).

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) –

The NW team received \$1.4 million allocation. April 1st is the deadline for ranking. There were some national changes in ranking, so applications will need to be re-ranked. Those changes address pollinator habitat and greenhouse gases. Regional funding pools have also changed. The national offices have said that local groups cannot set aside pools of funds at the regional level anymore. This means that the special pool of Whidbey Island farm funds is no longer allowed. All small farm producers are to be ranked the same region-wide. Alex gave a breakdown of the types of operations that should receive EQIP funding this year.

The organic EQIP initiative is also open for applications. The Lynden Field office has received a dozen applications.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) –

Staff has completed the 2 CSP projects for dairies. Lynden is the first office to complete these projects in Washington State. They think that they will do okay and may get funded. It appears that the average dairy should receive \$5,000 per year under CSP. If these projects go through, Alex anticipates that there will be more interest in the program in the future.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) –

There is only \$70,000 in funding this year for Washington State. It doesn't look like Whatcom County will get any projects funded this year.

Methane Digesters –

There is interest in doing single farm methane digesters on a smaller scale to generate power for the farm. The smaller scale should mean lower costs. It would be a way to utilize methane coming from the manure. Small metal tanks would be used for burning to generate electricity.

Methane digesters are not on the cost-share list for eligible practices this year. It was on the cost list until 2005 when it was removed. Alex said that NRCS will fund components of a methane digester, such as tanks and covers, but not complete digesters.

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) –

Applications for projects up to \$150,000 can be submitted.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) –

The federal offices were inspected by OSHA. Alex gave a brief rundown of what they reported.

D. George Boggs, Executive Director.

EQIP –

The local work groups are going to do resource assessments by District then roll together to prioritize the state resource concerns. They will map the science, problems and solutions to show what they would do if they had the funds to do it. They will compete nationally and locally for funds. A template will be available on March 1, 2010.

Geographic priority areas need to rank like farms with like farms. George will work on a template for the next Board meeting to share with the other Local Work Group members.

Legislature –

The Washington Association of Conservation District members will meet with state legislators in Olympia on February 25, 2010. Joe Heller will attend. The goal is to retain resources for Conservation Districts.

Department of Ecology -

George brought to the attention to the Board, that the Department of Ecology was proposing a Water Quality Livestock Grazing Manual. The manual prescribes “Best Management Practices” to be applied in all circumstances. If these were not used, then the landowner and planner could be subject to penalties. This is contrary to the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that the Department of Ecology has with the state Commission and Whatcom Conservation District. Historically, the Department of Ecology discovers a water quality problem or concern and directs the landowner to the Conservation District for solutions to be implemented to correct the issue or problem using NRCS standards for planning. The draft manual would instruct individuals to implement practices that are contrary to NRCS guidance.

Also, Ecology is proposing to incorporate into its orders BMPs that must be implemented. This takes away the discretion of conservation district planners to develop plans with the landowner after a full inventory of the farm has been completed. This, too, is contrary to the MOA.

George shared a flow chart from the Clean Samish Initiative that shows that DOE has the final say on which BMPs are to be used. While Ecology staff are highly skilled, this does not match the training, experience and education of Conservation District employees. George reviewed a proposed letter to the Director of the Department of Ecology addressing these concerns. The Board unanimously resolved to communicate to the Department of Ecology calling upon it to affirm the MOA or terminate it according to termination provisions in the MOA.

Larry Davis authorized Dick Yoder to sign the letter sharing the Board’s concerns. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Swift Creek Update –

Surface water being tested in Swift Creek is testing at 10x national standards in asbestos. There is a movement to shift from surface to ground water withdrawal. Whatcom County has allocated \$100,000 to do a study regarding cleaning out the sediment basins on Swift Creek. George will keep the Board posted.

VIII. Record of Board Actions.

10-11 Larry Davis moved that the minutes of the January 13, 2010 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

10-12 Joe Heller 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.

10-13

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10-14 Terry Lenssen moved to approve the Livestock Nutrient Management Plans for TJ Veen Acres (John Vander Veen). Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

10-15 Larry Davis moved to authorize George Boggs as the designated representative for purchases for federal and state surplus property and sign the necessary paperwork. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

10-16 Larry Davis authorized Dick Yoder to sign the letter sharing the Board's concerns. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

IX. Adjournment.

There being no further business before the meeting, Larry Davis moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting, on motion duly made, seconded and carried, adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Dated: March 24, 2010

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant

Approved: _____