

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Public Meeting Minutes
February 9, 2011**

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 9, 2011, at 7:00 p.m.

II. Attendance and Quorum.

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

Terry Lenssen	Larry Davis
Ed Stone	Dick Yoder

Also in attendance were:

George Boggs, Executive Director	Alex Hall, NRCS staff
Dawn Bekenyi, Admin. Assistant	Rick Noble, NRCS Olympia
Stu Trefry, WSCC	

III. Meeting Called to Order.

Terry Lenssen, acting as Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

IV. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting.

Dick Yoder moved that the minutes of the January 5, 2011 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

V. Financial Report.

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

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

Larry Davis moved to approve the Financial Report. Dick Yoder 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 2011 - balance					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>18345</u>	through	<u>18356</u>	and totaling	<u>5,616.32</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>18357</u>	through	<u>18369</u>	and totaling	<u>28,251.56</u>
February 2011					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>18370</u>	through	<u>18382</u>	and totaling	<u>13,480.32</u>

Payroll check numbers: 18383 through 18395 and totaling 28,340.13
Moved by Larry Davis. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VI. Action Items.

A. Approval of Contracts.

CREP Contracts –

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (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. The Conservation Commission funds districts to provide technical assistance and financial assistance to maintain the projects for up to five years. A District resource specialist (Wayne, Sonya or Chuck) works with a landowner to develop a conservation plan that includes practices meeting the landowner's needs. These may include the siting and selection of suitable tree, shrub or grass species for desired riparian forest, hedgerow, filter strip or wetland practice. It is reviewed for technical sufficiency by the Natural Resources Conservation Service representative (Alex) and George. 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 then brought to the Board for its approval. Absent unusual circumstances, the Board approves the State Conservation Commission prescribed standard-language maintenance agreement.

There were five CREP maintenance contracts submitted for Board approval.

Larry Davis moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contracts for:

- 1. John Johansen (10-04-CS:10-06)**
- 2. Barb Garrett (10-04-CS:10-23)**
- 3. Magna Veritas LLC (Richard Bailey) (10-04-CS:10-17)**
- 4. Leslie (Sonny) Meehan & Amy Glasser (10-04-CS:10-13)**
- 5. Brad Schmidt (10-04-CS:10-24)**

Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

CREP PIP Loan (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program – Practice Incentive Payment) –
There was one new CREP PIP Loan.

Ed Stone moved to approve the CREP PIP Loan for Ynaias Miranda for \$4,068.00. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

NRCS Inter-Local Agreement –

George provided background regarding the NRCS Inter-Local Agreement. It would maintain the confidentiality of shared NRCS files and cartography. Under a recent State Supreme Court case this information would not be subject to a public disclosure request under state law. Unless the District executes this agreement, staff would not be allowed to access NRCS files. This is necessary to provide technical assistance to landowners and operators. The Board authorized the Chair to sign the agreement.

Dick Yoder moved to approve the NRCS Inter-Local Agreement and authorize the District Chair to sign it. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

EPA Birch Bay Project Watershed Trusted Advisor Contract –

George and Larry reviewed the hiring process to select the Birch Bay Trusted Advisor. There were thirteen applicants. Seven were interviewed by the hiring committee. NSEA was selected as the successful candidate with Rachel Vasak as the designated "trusted advisor".

Larry Davis moved to approve selection of NSEA with Rachel Vasak as the Birch Bay "Trusted Advisor" and enter into a contract in the amount of \$120,000 for 3 ½ years beginning February 1, 2011. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VII. Other Business.

A. Supervisor Report(s).

Larry Davis – Larry sent a report on his activities at the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) annual meeting.

- Three resolutions from our state passed. The power resolution was initially sidetracked, but it was brought up with 2/3 vote at the board of directors general session and was passed.
- Larry reported that some wolf legislation was introduced at the federal level. There was an article in the New York Times about the wolf issue as well.
- Larry volunteered for two task forces. One is a policy review task force reviewing all NACD policies. The other is as the Pacific Region representative on the NACD Stewardship and Education Committee, if needed.
- Larry briefly discussed the Western Coalition of Conservation Districts which met the day before the NACD conference formally began.

Local Work Group – Larry Davis currently chairs the Local Work Group. Seven counties are in our local work group. Larry is trying to set up video conferencing for the 2011 annual meeting. A date for the meeting will be set soon.

Dick Yoder – Dick went to Olympia with the Washington State Cattlemen on February 8, 2011. Dick found it educational. They were able to talk with the Whatcom County legislators and they felt that the legislators listened to their concerns. The Cattlemen's BBQ in Olympia is scheduled for April 13, 2011.

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

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) – The EQIP applicants were ranked. There is approximately \$1 million for initial EQIP funds available. Approximately 13 contracts will be funded; 6 dairies, 2 small farms with livestock, 3 crop producers and 3 forestry producers. NRCS staff is now preparing cost estimates. Staff will work through as many as they can to utilize additional funds if funds become available. All funds need to be obligated by March 18, 2011.

The TSP (Technical Service Provider) Task Order between NRCS and the District has been approved to help with planning through May 31, 2011. Mary Kennedy is also assisting with the workload.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) – The deadline passed. There were three applications. The initial assessment will take place on March 9, 2011 with funds to be obligated in May.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) – There were six applications. There are limited funds for this program. There may be only one contract or possibly none. The applications will be kept for future funding.

C. Rick Noble, NRCS.

Rick Noble is the NRCS Area Conservationist in the Olympia office. Rick commended the Board on the good relationship between the NRCS staff at the Lynden Field Office and the Whatcom Conservation District staff. We work seamlessly on EQIP projects.

NRCS is operating under a continuing resolution until March. Rick gave an overview of funding and budget issues for NRCS at the national level.

Washington State NRCS was invited to submit a proposal for the Puget Sound Initiative for project funding. Rick reviewed the four focus areas; 1. Air quality BMPs (Best Management Practices), 2. BMPs for water quality and habitat for small farms that would not qualify for EQIP due to no or limited commercial sales, 3. Forested land, private non-industrial forest owners, and 4. Decommission or upgrade aging waste storage structures that are at the end of their serviceable life.

D. Stu Trefry, Washington State Conservation Commission.

Internal Audit Assessment – Stu mentioned that there are fewer funds in appropriation for audits of Conservation Districts. To address this issue the WA State Auditor's Office and WA Conservation Commission worked together, with conservation district input, to develop the Internal Audit Assessment – Schedule 22.

Dawn reviewed some items of interest from the Internal Audit Assessment Schedule 22. Stu and Larry Davis will be on the internal audit committee. The internal audit will be in April. Dawn will firm up a date with the committee.

WACD Webinar – Stu reminded the Board of the upcoming WACD budget webinar scheduled for February 10, 2011. The hearing on the merger bill is also scheduled for February 10. Terry and George said that they would attend.

Service Pin – Stu presented Dick Yoder with a 5-year service pin for his time with the Whatcom Conservation District.

E. George Boggs, Executive Director.

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Department of Ecology – George reviewed the letter from the Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) regarding termination of the MOU with the Department of Ecology. There was discussion. The Board decided to support the action of WACD and terminate our MOA with the Department of Ecology.

Dick Yoder moved to write a letter to the Director of the Department of Ecology asking to terminate our Memorandum of Agreement with them, with a copy of the letter going to the Washington State Conservation Commission, Governor, and our local legislators, DOE's Bellingham Field Office, Dan Newhouse (Director, State Department of Agriculture), WACD and the other Conservation Districts. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

There was further discussion regarding the MOA talks. Rick Noble was NRCS' representative in these recent talks. He gave the Board his view of meetings. The group discussed NRCS Field Technical Guides and specifications during these meetings. Talks broke down over specifications.

There is a bill to move all Livestock enforcement, not just Dairy, to the Department of Ag. The Senate hearing is set for Tuesday, February 15, 2011.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) – NOAA is prioritizing fisheries in basins. The Nooksack River is in the top tier. George explained the Population Recovery Approach for Puget Sound Chinook process. Funds would be used to create resource banks.

Larry Davis moved to write a letter to NOAA in support of the Population Recovery Approach for Puget Sound Chinook process. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

WACD Legislative Days – George reviewed the issues that the Board will want to discuss with their legislators. Joe, Larry, Terry and George will be attending.

Budget Review – George reviewed the basic outline of the proposed budget and potential impacts on staffing. There was discussion regarding funding and the problems with working on soft funds. It is important to discuss the matter with our state and local legislators.

Large Format Printer – George showed some of the printed maps, magnets, banners that Andrew was able to produce with the new large format printer.

Annual Plan of Work – Last year's Annual Plan of Work was passed out to review in preparation for this year. It is hard to do without a budget. The Board is looking to have the Annual Plan done for the April Board meeting.

Computers – Chris' laptop has crashed and has been problematic for a while. The Board authorized purchase of a new one.

Dick Yoder moved to purchase a new laptop computer for Chris Clark. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – EPA is concerned about nutrients in groundwater. George reported that EPA is working on a national permit. They are getting technical standards from each state. Three states have not done so yet. Washington is one of them. Staff has reviewed the 590 specifications and is making comments to send to other Districts. There is the potential to influence specifications that will be used for regulations.

Supervisor Election – The candidate deadline has passed. Terry is running unopposed.

March Board meeting – The March Board meeting has been changed to Tuesday, March 15, 2011 at 7:00 pm.

VIII. Record of Board Actions.

11-06 Dick Yoder moved that the minutes of the January 5, 2011 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

11-07 Larry Davis moved to approve the Financial Report. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed. Upon motion made and duly seconded, the Treasurer's Report was approved.

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5. Brad Schmidt (10-04-CS:10-24)

Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

- 11-10 Ed Stone moved to approve the CREP PIP Loan for Ynaias Miranda for \$4,068.00. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 11-11 Dick Yoder moved to approve the NRCS Inter-Local Agreement and authorize the District Chair to sign it. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 11-12 Larry Davis moved to approve selection of NSEA with Rachel Vasak as the Birch Bay "Trusted Advisor" and enter into a contract in the amount of \$120,000 for 3 ½ years beginning February 1, 2011. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 11-13 Dick Yoder moved to write a letter to the Director of the Department of Ecology asking to terminate our Memorandum of Agreement with them, with a copy of the letter going to the Washington State Conservation Commission, Governor, and our local legislators, DOE's Bellingham Field Office, Dan Newhouse (Director, State Department of Agriculture), WACD and the other Conservation Districts. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 11-14 Larry Davis moved to write a letter to NOAA in support of the Population Recovery Approach for Puget Sound Chinook process. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 11-15 Dick Yoder moved to purchase a new laptop computer for Chris Clark. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

IX. Adjournment.

There being no further business before the meeting, Dick Yoder moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting, on motion duly made, seconded and carried, adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Dated: April 4, 2011

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant

Approved: _____