

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Public Meeting Minutes
September 10, 2012**

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 10, 2012, at 7:00 p.m.

II. Attendance and Quorum.

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

Joe Heller, Chair
Larry Davis, Treasurer
Dick Yoder

Terry Lenssen, Vice-Chair
Larry Helm

Also in attendance were:

George Boggs, Executive Director
Dawn Bekenyi, Admin. Assistant
Chuck Timblin, Resource Technician-WCD

Alex Hall, NRCS staff
Jayne Uerling, Associate Supervisor
Wayne Chaudiere, Natural Resource Specialist-WCD

III. Meeting Called to Order.

Joe Heller, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

IV. Other Business.

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

Alex had to fly to Spokane for a NRCS meeting, so he asked to do his report first.

Lynden Field Office Tour – Alex reported that Roylene Rides at the Door, NRCS State Conservationist, and Rick Noble, NRCS West Area Conservationist, met with staff and toured projects. They looked at 4-5 farms that show existing and future work. Staff discussed regarding varying natural resources issues in our county. There should be positive follow-up from the tour.

Staffing – Alex is acting District Conservationist (DC) for the month of September. The duty of acting DC is rotating monthly between Kathy Kilcoyne and Alex until the position is filled. He will be attending the Quality Leadership Team Meeting in Spokane.

Larry Helm mentioned that while he was in California he noticed that they offered “how to” workshops for small farms regarding farming. It was explained that those types of workshops are usually done by WSU Extension in Washington State. Larry expressed his concern with no agriculture being taught in the schools. Children don’t know from where their food comes. Terry explained that he is involved in the Milk Makers Fest at the Lynden Fairgrounds. Dick said that the Cattlemen have done education in the classrooms in the past. Alex explained that NRCS is more program oriented rather than general technical assistance. However, Alex participates every year at the Soils station during the Whatcom County 5th & 6th Grade Conservation Tour and regional Envirothon competition.

B. Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).

Wayne Chaudiere gave background on CREP cost-share for maintenance policy and updates. Westside CREP maintenance policy states that all projects have a per acre budget cap based on

the size of the project. Additional funding beyond the maintenance budget cap may be approved by the local conservation district board on a case-by-case basis when recommended by the CREP technician. Projects exceeding their caps are to be reviewed and approved by the WCD Board. Afterward, those projects must be forwarded on to the State Conservation Commission for final approval. Four projects were presented to the WCD Board for maintenance budget cap increase approval. The need for beaver protection is the primary reason budgets are exceeding their per acre cap.

Larry Davis moved to approve the CREP maintenance budget cap increase for the four projects listed (Meg Delzell, Bill Crofut, Brian Smith & Don Starr). Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

V. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting.

Terry Lenssen moved that the minutes of the August 13, 2012 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VI. Financial Report.

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

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant, presented the financial report. There were no questions.

Larry Helm moved to approve the Financial Report. Terry Lenssen 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:

Aug 2012- balance					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>19748</u>	through	<u>19767</u>	and totaling	<u>4,290.07</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>19768</u>	through	<u>19781</u>	and totaling	<u>27,796.45</u>
September 2012					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>19782</u>	through	<u>19797</u>	and totaling	<u>22,240.94</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>19798</u>	through	<u>19810</u>	and totaling	<u>27,586.64</u>

Moved by Larry Helm. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

2012-2013 Budget Approval –

Dawn gave some background on how she develops the District budget. It is based on the projected revenues including funds available if all intended grant funds are utilized during the proposed time period and historical expenditures.

Larry Davis moved to approve the 2012-2013 Budget. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Larry Helm wanted Dawn to look into the state sales tax requirement on our annual plant sale.

VII. Other Business.

Chuck Timblin, Resource Technician –

Chuck gave a power point presentation on other farm planning beside dairy and CREP. We do a standard farm conservation plan checklist and custom crop farm plans. He reviewed the nine steps of planning, including identifying problems and the farmers objectives. The two biggest resource concerns that are addressed with farm planning are harmful pathogens and threatened species. The three leading reasons clients seek technical assistance for their small farms are 1) seek cost-share funds, 2) seek to meet regulatory requirements, or 3) both. Farm planning is a two-way process between the farmer and the Conservation District.

The standard farm conservation plan checklist is for small farms with low impact. They have a common set of problems and solutions, which the checklist addresses. The three critical areas addressed by the checklist are streams, wetlands and groundwater. The checklist process outcome is an action plan. Action plan tools are the *Tips on Land & Water Management for Small Farm and Livestock Owners in Whatcom County, Washington*, and various Best Management Practice (BMP) fact sheets. The use of plants and grasses, rather than bare ground, is recommended for small farms. Buffer areas are “farm with caution zones.”

The other non-dairy farm planning is custom farm plans with crops. Chuck explained that Whatcom County Planning wanted us to develop a planning process for crop farms. Larry Helm said that a lot of new landowners are acquiring farms without the knowledge of what to do with them. Chuck shared the draft plan practice guide. It outlines problems and solutions.

There was board discussion regarding exempt wells for watering cattle, water rights and the current legal climate.

VIII. Action Items.

A. Approval of Conservation Plans.

Dairy Nutrient Management Plan (DNMP) Approval –

There was one Dairy Nutrient Management Plan submitted for Board approval. It is a digester plan.

Dick Yoder moved to approve the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for Edaleen Dairy. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) Farm Plan Approval –

There was one CAO Farm Plan submitted for Board approval.

Terry Lenssen moved to approve the CAO Farm Plan for Beldar Haven LLC. (Guy Seeklus). Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Dairy Nutrient Management Plan (DNMP) Certification –

There was one Dairy Nutrient Management Plan submitted for certification by the Board. The certification checklist has been completed by Chris Clark. Vegetative and structural practices are in place and the producer has signed off certifying management according to the plan.

Terry Lenssen moved to certify the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for Trails Edge Dairy (Scott James). Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

B. Asset Management Policy.

The Board reviewed and approved the proposed Asset Management Policy. It was the consensus of the Board that donation of surplus assets should first be offered to other Conservation Districts, then schools, and finally local groups with environmental charters.

Larry Davis moved to approve the Asset Management Policy. Further it was the consensus of the Board that donation of surplus assets should first be offered to other Conservation Districts and then schools and local groups with environmental charters. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

C. Education Funds.

Nichole Embertson, WCD Resource Coordinator, submitted a proposal to request Educational Funds for the Whatcom Dairy Speaker series. In an effort to bring relevant information and education to dairy farmers in Whatcom County, the Whatcom Conservation District, Washington State University Extension, and the Washington Dairy Federation are partnering to bring Whatcom dairy farmers an informational Dairy Speaker Series starting in September. Nichole has obtained some funding from WSU Extension, the Washington Dairy Federation and her ARM grant. She anticipates that this will fund five events. She asked the Board in her approval to authorize use of some of the funds earmarked for educational outreach to continue the series.

The Board discussed setting a limit on the funds to be used. Larry Helm suggested an authorization of \$1,500. Dick Yoder suggested that Nichole ask the local Cattlemen's Association for funds to help support the series. Larry Helm would like to see some of the education funds used to inform school children in Ag matters. It was suggested to charge a minimal amount for attendance in the speaker series. It was determined that this would be counter-active to getting the participation that we desire. Larry Davis offered to work with Larry Helm and Jayne Uerling to explore K-12 outreach strategies. The Board would like to form a committee to review outreach efforts for K-12 school children.

Dick Yoder moved to make funds available from the education fund for the dairy series to be revisited at a later date. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

IX. Other Business.

A. George Boggs, Executive Director.

George was not present at the Board meeting due to attending out-of-town training. He submitted a monthly report with matters to be discussed by the Board.

Drainage Issue – George reported, per the Board's direction, that he had spoken with Bob Everitt, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), regarding the need to attach certainty to the watercourse characterization maps. He agreed, through the submission of a request from the Drainage Improvement District (DID) to David Brock, WDFW Region 4 Habitat Program Manager, for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the DID and WDFW. This would secure WDFW's commitment to review the watercourse characterization map and bind local biologists to the designations. It is also possible to identify in advance what is to be mitigated, what the mitigation would be, and where it would take place. This could allow the DID to designate alternative mitigation sites. George wrote a letter to the DID within which Bob VanWeerdhuizen resides, and apprising the Commissioners of the incident and the opportunity for them to avoid this happening in the future by taking advantage of the MOU process.

Larry Davis directed George to draft a similar letter to the Whatcom County Executive and Council regarding the drainage issue. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Exemptions to Fill and Grade Permits – George drafted a letter to the County Ag Advisory Committee requesting resuscitation of a prior policy for exemptions to the Fill and Grade Permit requirements.

Larry Helm moved to authorize sending the Streamline Permitting Requirements for Implementation of Conservation Practices letter to the Whatcom County Ag Advisory Committee. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Swift Creek – The letter regarding asbestos issues in the area was sent out to about 90 landowners. The District has not received any phone calls regarding the matter.

Ecology/WCD Letter of Intent – George has contacted the Bellingham Office about a working relationship.

Wolves – George sent some articles to the Board regarding the wolf issue. There was general discussion regarding the wolf issue by the Board. Ten calves were killed in Eastern Washington and the producer was not given compensation for the loss. There was discussion regarding wolf travel, territory and hunting habits. There was also brief discussion regarding cougar hunting habits.

B. Supervisor Reports.

Joe Heller – Joe will be attending the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) meeting in Chelan next week.

Larry Davis – The WSCC is setting up three short-term task forces and they are looking for two Supervisors for each committee. The WSCC committees are Allocations Task Force, Communications Task Force, and Agency Coordination to Maximize Efficiencies (ACME) Task Force. If anyone is interested in serving on these committees, they should inform the Commission.

Larry also reported that three Conservation Districts; Grant, Moses Lake, and Warden; are consolidating into a new one, Grant County Conservation District.

Larry reported that the Washington Association of Conservation Districts is looking at increasing district dues if the association wants to keep the same level of service provided. Dues have not increased since 2006.

Larry Helm – Larry talked with Whatcom County to try and determine how many beef cows are in the County. He went out to talk with producers and found that they were not forthcoming to “someone from the government.” Dick said that a producer’s cow numbers are proprietary information and is not shared with most people.

Dick Yoder – Dick reported that wolves are killing more than is being reported. Another problem with compensation from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is that WDFW wanted to pay at the time the calves are killed. Producers want compensation for costs at the time a calf is weaned. The producer is losing money.

Terry Lenssen – Terry mentioned that feed costs have gone up a lot this year. Last year he paid around \$254 a ton for canola and this year it is \$445. Corn has also gone up from \$290 to \$383 a ton.

Jayne Uerling – Jayne has enjoyed staff coming in and doing reports. She hopes that this continues, since it helps to keep the Board informed of what staff is doing.

C. Other Business.

Board Meeting Day and Time – In October the scheduled Board meeting falls on a holiday. It was also mentioned that Monday’s are not working well for all board members to attend the meetings. It was suggested to change the day. The time will stay at 7:00 p.m.

Larry Helm moved to change the monthly Board meetings to the second Thursday of the month starting in October at 7:00 p.m. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Supervisor Election – Dawn reported that the deadline is approaching to pass the Election Resolution for the 2013 Supervisor Election. As per the Election Policy Manual notice of the intent to adopt the election resolution setting the election date, time and process for the supervisor election must be published twice in the newspaper of greatest circulation prior to the board meeting. The resolution will be adopted at the November board meeting.

Dick Yoder directed Dawn to publish the necessary Notice of Intent to Adopt the Election Resolution at the November board meeting ads in the Bellingham Herald. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Associate Supervisor – There was discussion regarding granting Jayne Uerling voting proxy at the NW Area and Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) Annual meetings.

Larry Davis moved to authorize a letter be written to the Washington Association of Conservation Districts granting Jayne Uerling proxy voting authority for the 2012 NW Area and WACD Annual meetings. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

X. Record of Board Actions.

12-84 Larry Davis moved to approve the CREP maintenance budget cap increase for the four projects listed (Meg Delzell, Bill Crofut, Brian Smith & Don Starr). Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

12-85 Terry Lenssen moved that the minutes of the August 13, 2012 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

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XI. Adjournment.

There being no further business before the meeting, Terry Lenssen moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 p.m. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting, on motion duly made, seconded and carried, adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Dated: October 23, 2012

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant

Approved: _____