

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Public Meeting Minutes
November 8, 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 November 8, 2012, at 7:00 p.m.

II. Attendance and Quorum.

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

Joe Heller, Chair	Terry Lenssen, Vice-Chair
Larry Davis, Treasurer	Larry Helm
Dick Yoder	

Also in attendance were:

George Boggs, Executive Director	Alex Hall, NRCS staff
Dawn Bekenyi, Admin. Assistant	Corina Cheever, Planning Technician

III. Meeting Called to Order.

Joe Heller, 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 October 11, 2012 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

V. Financial Report.

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

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

Larry Helm 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:

Oct 2012 - balance					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>19890</u>	through	<u>19914</u>	and totaling	<u>39,875.72</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>19915</u>	through	<u>19927</u>	and totaling	<u>28,018.82</u>
November 2012					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>19928</u>	through	<u>19986</u>	and totaling	<u>67,504.49</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>19987</u>	through	<u>19999</u>	and totaling	<u>27,979.06</u>

Moved by Larry Helm. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VI. Action Items.

A. Approval of Conservation Plans.

Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) Farm Plan Approval –

There was one CAO Farm Plan submitted for Board approval. George discussed the plan. The farm ground is leased by the producer. A new producer would require a new farm plan, as farms are dynamic.

Larry Helm moved to approve the CAO Farm Plan for Doug Weibe. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

B. Supervisor Election Resolution.

Dick Yoder's (elected) term is expiring. The election date was set and the Board selected Dawn as Election Supervisor. Notification of the election time and date will be sent to Jim Fox, official election observer in Whatcom County.

Larry Davis moved to adopt and sign Resolution 12-1 Whatcom Conservation District Supervisors Election Resolution as follows:

- **Election held at the District office, 6975 Hannegan Road, Lynden, WA**
- **On Tuesday, March 12, 2013,**
- **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 request.**
- **Candidate filing deadline is February 1, 2013 at 4:00 pm.**
- **The last day to request an absentee ballot is February 11, 2013 at 4:00 pm.**

Terry Lensen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

C. Skagit Conservation District.

Skagit Conservation District sent a letter requesting assistance with farm planning. George informed the Board that the District has a Small Acreage grant that could be used for this purpose. He expressed that staff would be available for the remaining two months of this grant and could assist Skagit with their workload. There currently is an interlocal agreement in place with Skagit Conservation District to share staff. The Board was agreeable to assisting Skagit.

Larry Helm moved to authorize staff to assist Skagit Conservation District with their workload under our inter-local agreement, as funding allows. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VII. Other Business.

A. Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD).

WACD Annual Meeting – Joe will not be able to attend. A letter giving his proxy vote to Jayne Uerling was approved by the Board.

Staff Assistance – The District received a request for staff assistance (Dawn Bekenyi) to provide administrative help at the WACD annual meeting. WACD would provide registration, rooming and meals, but could not pay for staff time.

Dick Yoder moved to send Dawn Bekenyi to the WACD Annual meeting to provide administrative assistance to WACD. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed. (Larry Helm abstained from the vote. There was no opposition. He was unclear regarding the particulars of the annual meeting and the duties requested.)

B. Water Purifier.

Alex presented a letter from FSA and NRCS staff regarding the drinking water and obtaining a water purifier for the break room sink. The question of water quality was discussed. George provided input from the Pole Road Water Association regarding testing levels. The water meets federal standards. The issue is accommodating tenants' requests. The cost to install a purifier was discussed. In the initial request, building occupants said that they would provide some funds towards the installation and subsequently purchase the necessary filters to maintain the system. There was further discussion regarding the maintenance and logistics of the purifier.

Dick Yoder authorized installation of a water purifier on the break room sink. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

C. Staff Presentation.

Corina Cheever, Planning Technician –

Corina gave a presentation regarding the Quickbase on-line database that the District has implemented for tracking all livestock operations and small farms. The District can retrieve information easily from the system. We can produce reports for the Washington State Conservation Commission that track hours and workload. Corina is currently adding stream miles and acres which will be useful for reporting purposes. There was some discussion regarding ditches versus streams. The stream miles reported are those that are shown on the fish presence layer.

Crop farms are not currently in the system, as staff have not worked with many. There was discussion regarding the potential to add a crop layer from some data that has been collected, if it would be useful. However, adding this information will take time.

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

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) – Alex reported that December 21, 2012 is the sign-up deadline for the current round of EQIP. Ranking will be done January 25. The contract deadline is March 22, 2013. All initiatives (high tunnel and organic) will have the same deadlines this round. The next round of sign-ups will be in February.

There will probably be another round of Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Program (PSSRP) funding.

Conservation Security Program (CSP) – The CSP is still active. The sign-up deadline is February 15, 2013. Funding will be done by July 1, 2013. This program was funded by continuing resolution.

Local Work Group (LWG) – Nothing has happened on the local work group process since Steve Nissley retired. Alex reported that he was going to teleconference with Kathy Kilcoyne and Rick Noble regarding what steps need to occur prior to contracting. Larry Davis will join the teleconference, if possible. Larry would like feedback from NRCS regarding the local work group's recommendations. Do the recommendations impact contracting? How?

Staff – A new District Conservationist was hired. Tony Sunseri will start on December 17 and be up at the Lynden field office on December 18, 2012. He is coming from Grass Valley, CA.

E. Supervisor Reports.

Larry Davis –

Larry will finish visiting all nine Conservation Districts with his attendance at the Kitsap Conservation District meeting on November 14, 2012.

January 8, 2013, in his capacity as chair of the Northwest Local Work Group, Larry will meet with tribal liaisons regarding their interest in forming a Western Washington Tribal Conservation District.

Larry Helm –

Larry attended the Global Warming conference in Bellingham, WA.

Larry has been talking to members of the County Ag Committee about the Whatcom Conservation District and how we can help. Whatcom County is currently working on growth management. George discussed the 1997 Ag Overlay and Growth Management Act.

Larry is going to be a part of WSCC's Communication Committee. He spoke with the committee chair regarding individuals using technology. The committee should determine if their audience using technology.

F. George Boggs, Executive Director.

Livestock Program – George attended the Region 10 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Animal Feeding Operation/Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (AFO/CAFO) meeting in Boise, ID. Representatives from NRCS, Department of Ecology, EPA and Department of Agriculture from Oregon, Idaho and Washington met to discuss nutrients and pathogens. George was the only representative from Conservation Districts. At the meeting, George spoke regarding the effectiveness of Conservation Districts as technical assistance delivery system helping livestock owners protect water quality.

Oregon and Idaho accept NRCS practices for planning and regulation purposes. It appears that only Washington State has a problem with NRCS practices being adequate to address water quality concerns. George shared with the Board how EPA 319 funds were used in the other states to fund water quality programs. Conservation Districts are direct recipients of these funds in many other states.

Water Quality – There is an issue nationally with surface run-off of phosphorus. NRCS is working on a Phosphorus (P) Index to address pollution and application allowances. The P Index would classify farmland as low, medium or high. No manure applications would be allowed on ground with a "high" P Index rating. There are three large grants to model and proof the science of the Phosphorus Index.

The Washington State NRCS office can accept the national standard or develop its own P Index. Chris Clark is on NRCS WA committee to draft the Washington State Phosphorus Standard (P Index). There was discussion regarding the process. Studies are just beginning in the next year. Soil conditions vary widely from region to region, even within counties. Dan Sullivan, PhD stated that 90% of phosphate is fixed on sediment. If there is no erosion, the phosphate laden sediment does not move. The question is if this phosphorus is available for plant growth. The new tool needs to be accurate, based on good solid science that takes into account consequences of enough available nutrients. The last field book is from 1972. The science also needs to be updated based on today's conditions.

George mentioned the EPA ground water study in Yakima. Critics say that the study is biased and the science and conclusions questionable. This could bring their credibility into question.

Pollution Control Action Team (PCAT) – George gave an update of the process. The Whatcom Clean Water Program draft has been written. Whatcom Conservation District will work with walk-

ins, but are only accepting Department of Ecology referrals for non-commercial livestock operations through this process. Planners are taxed with the current workload of dairy referrals.

Abbotsford-Sumas Aquifer Task Force – The Abbotsford-Sumas Aquifer Task Force will meet for the first time in three years on January 17, 2013.

Whatcom Integration Initiative – The Whatcom Conservation District was invited to participate in the Whatcom Integration Team. The Team serves in an advisory capacity and will recommend to the WRIA 1 Policy Board and WRIA 1 Management Team. George attended the last meeting and will continue to participate.

Sustainable Funding – Larry Helm commented that the District needs to be proactive with our legislators and our budget. We should meet locally to share our projects and successes with our legislators. More stable funding sources would be an assessment of rates and charges. The Board needs to address the implications to staffing if the budget is severely cut. The Board expressed a strong desire to keep all staff, if possible.

NACD Annual Meeting – There is no funding to send Jayne to the National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting in Texas this year. The scholarship is only available if you stay at the hotel.

VIII. Record of Board Actions.

12-110 Dick Yoder moved that the minutes of the October 11, 2012 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

12-111 Larry Helm 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.

12-112

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12-113 Larry Helm moved to approve the CAO Farm Plan for Doug Weibe. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

12-114 Larry Davis moved to adopt and sign Resolution 12-1 Whatcom Conservation District Supervisors Election Resolution as follows:

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Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

12-115 Larry Helm moved to authorize staff to assist Skagit Conservation District with their workload under our inter-local agreement, as funding allows. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

12-116 Dick Yoder moved to send Dawn Bekenyi to the WACD Annual meeting to provide administrative assistance to WACD. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed. (Larry Helm abstained from the vote. There was no opposition. He was unclear regarding the particulars of the annual meeting and the duties requested.)

12-117 Dick Yoder authorized installation of a water purifier on the break room sink. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

IX. Adjournment.

There being no further business before the meeting, Terry Lenssen moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:53 p.m. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting, on motion duly made, seconded and carried, adjourned at 9:53 p.m.

Dated: December 31, 2012

Approved: _____

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant