



Okanogan Conservation District

1251 S. Second Ave, Room 102

Okanogan, WA 98840

DRAFT

TO: The Record
SUBJECT: April 4, 2024; Board of Supervisors Meeting
LOCATION: Okanogan Conservation District Office, Okanogan, WA and
Remotely via Microsoft Teams and Teleconference
FROM: Cassandra Lange-Predoehl, Administrative Assistant

PRESENT:

Jerry Asmussen, Vice Chair	Dylan Streeter, Wildfire Resiliency & Recovery Planner
Steve Colvin, Auditor	Eli Loftis, Wildfire Community & Resiliency Lead
Phillip Dart, Supervisor	Emmy Engle, Communication & Outreach Specialist
Edd Townsend, Supervisor	Aaron Wold, Range Planner
Randy Kelley, Associate Supervisor	Taylor George, VSP Coordinator
Craig Nelson, Executive Director	Brant Rosenthal Smith, Science Data & Mon. Coord.
Becky Drenner, Finance Director	Chevelle Yeckel, Water Quality & Riparian Planner
Jordana Ellis, Irrigation Planner	Sarah Troutman, NRCS
Cassandra Lange-Predoehl, Admin. Assistant	

Meeting Call to Order: Jerry Asmussen called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM. He completed a roll call of Supervisors, Associate Supervisors, staff, partners, and the public.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Agenda Approval: Phillip Dart moved to approve the agenda as amended. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Phillip Dart moved to approve the March 7, 2024 board meeting minutes as presented. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report #851, which covers the checking account activity from March 8, 2024, to April 4, 2024, inclusive, was presented for the Board's approval. The following checks/payroll/direct withdrawals/electronic payments were approved for payment:

Checks – number 12386 – 12405 totaling \$47,369.22.

Two payroll direct withdrawals – numbers ACH4754 – ACH4779 totaling \$48,759.33.

Electronic payments – numbers EFT3378 – EFT3389 totaling \$33,986.27.

Deposits totaling \$253,598.43 were made.

Becky added that \$100,000.00 was moved from Checking to Savings after the chipper purchase was reimbursed.

Phillip Dart moved to approve Treasurer's Report #851 as presented. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Supervisor Reports:

Jerry Asmussen – Jerry reported that there was ice on the tops of water troughs that morning and expressed concern about winterkill on fruit trees.

Steve Colvin – Steve discussed the impact of the recent extreme cold weather on different crops, noting heavy damage to grapes.

Lorah Super – Lorah was not present.

Edd Townsend – Edd reported that the winterkill damage in crops is becoming apparent, especially in late-seeded crops. Despite this, ponds have been adequately refilled, providing a promising start to the season but Edd did point out that water distribution remains erratic, with some areas receiving ample rainfall and others close by significantly less.

Phillip Dart – Phillip apologized for not being able to attend the election and added that he thoroughly enjoyed his vacation.

Associate Supervisor Reports:

Randy Kelley – Randy reported that he had gathered beverages for the Conservation Celebration.

Staff Reports:

Craig reported that the DDT remediation project is continuing to progress, with a meeting scheduled for the coming week with two involved landowners. Department of Ecology staff are also assessing bacteria levels in the Bonaparte Creek Watershed and may be sending out letters to necessary landowners. Typically, these letters mention funding opportunities with NRCS or the district for areas with cattle along the creek. Switching gears, Craig mentioned that Mike Baden from the Washington State Conservation Commission will be conducting an annual project review. Six projects from our district were randomly selected for review. Craig concluded his report by mentioning that he discussed the agenda format with Mike Baden, who recommended adding a public comment period to the agenda before each major section.

Chevelle reported that Allison Parts with Trout Unlimited is pursuing a National Fish and Wildlife grant to fund technical assistance to landowners for NRCS farm bill funding. Craig and Kim are to review the outline, scope of work, and budget.

Eli reported that he submitted grant opportunity items to the Washington State Resource Development Council for the Fire Adaptive Communities Network, funding additional time for a new air quality planner, post-fire watershed outreach and education, and additional funding requests for WAFAC training. Eli also gave an update on the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Brant reported that he is in the final stage of the draft of the monitoring plan. It will be approved by the VSP Work Group, then it will go to the Washington State Conservation Commission for final approval.

Becky reported that Phillip was unofficially reelected during the district election. There were fifteen votes total. The Washington State Conservation Commission will certify the election in May. Becky added that the Schedule 22 is due at the end of May. Becky ended by announcing that the district signed a contract with Springbrook, which is a finance software program other conservation districts are using.

NRCS Report

Sarah Troutman sent out a report, which was included in board documents. Sarah was present and gave an update on task orders and staffing changes.

Partner Reports

There were no partners present.

Review, Approve and Sign Contracts and Conservation Plans:

Hashknife Ranch Virtual Fence Collars Cost-Share Contract – Aaron reported that Hashknife Ranch plans to implement virtual fencing for a second year on their United States Forest Services (USFS) Allotment of 250 head. The aim is to implement prescribed grazing and protect riparian areas. Through a Natural Resource Investments (NRI) cost-share contract, there would be a 75:25 cost-share rate, with NRI providing \$9,750.00 and the landowner responsible for \$3,250.00. The permit encompasses 65,570 acres of pastures with cross-fencing that were affected by the 2022 Cub Creek Fire. Aaron provided an overview of how the collars work and outlined the project goals, including improving and protecting wildlife habitats such as leek denning sites, migration corridors, and riparian areas. The project also aims to enhance grazing management practices such as rotational grazing, targeted grazing for cheatgrass, and improving utilization. Steve Colvin moved to approve the use of \$9,750.00 of NRI funding for the Hashknife Cost-Share Contract. Phillip Dart seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Rosenblatt Hazard Tree Cost-Share Agreement – Eli reported that the Rosenblatt property, which suffered from a wildfire in 2015, continues to face challenges related to forest health and wildfire fuel. These challenges pose risks to livestock fencing due to the potential hazard of fire-killed timber falling and damaging the fence. To address this issue, the district aims to assist the cooperators through cost-sharing in reducing wildfire fuel and mitigating the risk to the fence. This will involve removing all standing dead timber within a 100-foot buffer zone that could potentially strike the fence. The removed material will be piled on-site and allowed to decompose. The total area requiring treatment is 34.1 acres, with the total Best Management Practice (BMP) cost estimated at \$29,690.20. The district will contribute up to \$22,267.64 for the standard 75:25 cost-share rate, while the cooperators' 25% share is estimated at \$7,422.55. Phillip Dart moved to authorize Craig Nelson to sign the Rosenblatt Hazard Tree Cost-Share Agreement when it is ready. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Wolf Creek BC LLC Cost-Share Agreement – Eli reported that the district is collaborating with Wolf Creek BC LLC, a collective of property owners managing 27 acres along Wolf Creek in the Methow, to reduce the property's vulnerability to wildfire. Approximately 10.9 acres of the property require treatment for this purpose. The prescribed practices aim to mitigate fire risk

by conducting a thinning from below approach, targeting small trees (<8' DBH) up to 10' to 20' outside of mature or older trees' driplines, cutting standing dead fuels, and removing accumulations of downed vegetation and ladder fuels. Ponderosa pine will be retained whenever possible, with Douglas fir having priority for removal due to its lower drought and fire tolerance. Thinning is intended to reduce competition for the site's western red cedar. Slash and residues generated during treatment, with a diameter of 1" or greater, will be piled no greater than 10' in diameter and 6' tall. Larger debris piles will either be burned or chipped. Additionally, two wildlife habitat piles will be constructed to provide cover for wildlife after treatment. The reduction of wildfire hazard through these fuel treatments aims to decrease the residual stands' susceptibility to catastrophic wildfire. The total Best Management Practices (BMP) cost is estimated at \$10,847.02, with the district contributing \$8,135.26 as a 75% cost-share of the total estimated BMP cost. The cooperator is expected to contribute \$2,711.76. Funding for this project is provided through the WSCC Forest Health and Community Wildfire Resiliency grant. Steve Colvin moved to authorize Craig Nelson to sign the Wolf Creek BC LLC Cost-Share Agreement once it is ready. Phillip Dart seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

24-19-DDT Grand Addendum – Taylor reported that the Department of Ecology is providing funding for the purchase, delivery, and placement of soil on cannabis farms in Okanogan County, where DDT levels in cannabis plants exceeded the action levels set by the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board (LCB). These activities are part of implementing the pilot program referred to in Section 3038. The funding will be provided to the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC), which will then pass the funds to the district. The district will be responsible for conducting the soil purchase, delivery, and placement activities and covering all associated costs. The district will track soil purchases, delivery, and placement costs separately for each farm and provide adequate reimbursement backup documentation per farm when submitting an invoice to the WSCC, who will then provide all documentation to the Department of Ecology. This topic was discussed at length. Phillip Dart moved to authorize Craig Nelson or his designee to submit the addendum for the 24-19-DDT project and authorize staff to carry out all necessary cost-share and contracting to implement the project as expeditiously as possible within standard protocol. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Loup Loup Creek Restoration Design Grant Agreement Amendment #4 –

Chevelle reported that Grant Agreement #20-1469P, funded by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) through the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), initially outlined a scope of work that included creating design plans for a steelhead habitat restoration project on 600 feet of private property along Loup Loup Creek in Malott, WA. Additionally, it included the deliverable of developing a Loup Loup Creek Reach Assessment (LLCRA) Report. In the fall of 2023, the landowner contacted staff and informed them they no longer wished to pursue the design project. Consequently, staff submitted an amendment to modify the agreement to remove the design scope of work from the agreement, transfer the remaining funds allocated for the design and reach assessment report developmental task. And extend the effective date of the grant agreement from May 30, 2024, to September 30, 2024, to accommodate the completion and approval of the LLCRA. Phillip Dart moved to approve the Loup Loup Creek Restoration Design Grant Agreement Amendment #4 and authorize Craig Nelson to sign it. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Amendment to the Personal Services Contract with Confluence Environmental Company – Chevelle reported that due to adjusted timelines, the draft report for the Loup Loup Creek Reach Assessment (LLCRA) will be submitted to the Upper Columbia Regional Technical Team (UCRTT) for comments on April 10. The final report is scheduled for presentation and approval at the UCRTT’s July board meeting. Originally, the approval for the personal services contract with Confluence Environmental Company did not include the consultant presenting the draft and final report to the UCRTT. Additionally, the contract was set to conclude on May 31, 2024. Given the consultant’s familiarity with the report’s content and the UCRTT Board, staff are proposing an amendment. This amendment will include the consultant’s presentation of the draft and final report within the scope of work. Moreover, a budget increase of up to \$6,000.00 is requested to accommodate the expanded scope of work. The contract term will also be extended until September 30, 2024, to allow for completion of additional tasks. Phillip Dart moved to approve Amendment #1 to the Contract with Confluence Environmental Company and authorized Craig Nelson to sign it. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

City of Omak Memorandum of Agreement – Dylan reported that the district aims to enter into a memorandum of agreement with the City of Omak to conduct community chipping and yard waste disposal events for Omak residents, with the objective of enhancing air quality. This agreement will facilitate prompt assistance between the district and the City of Omak under supplemental statements of work, with a financial cap not exceeding \$10,000.00. Phillip Dart moved to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with the City of Omak and authorized Craig Nelson to sign any resulting supplemental statements of work. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Fonseca Forestry Purchased Services Contract for Nespelem Chipping Event – Dylan reported that the district is collaborating with the Colville Tribe and Fonseca Forestry to host a stationary chipping event in Nespelem on May 25. The event will take place at the Nespelem Powwow grounds, providing residents of Nespelem and surrounding areas the opportunity to bring their materials. Fonseca Forestry will oversee the chipping process and distribute the chips along dirt roads on the property. The total cost of the event is estimated to be up to \$4,065.00, covering eight hours of chipping, including all necessary equipment and personnel, as well as two hours of travel to and from Nespelem. Edd Townsend moved to approve the Fonseca Forestry Purchased Services Contract for the Nespelem Chipping Event and authorized Craig Nelson to sign it. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Board member Jerry Asmussen had to leave the meeting, and district auditor Steve Colvin took over running the meeting.

24/7 Property Maintenance Personal Services Contract for the City of Omak and Crumbacher Chipping Events – Dylan reported that the district is seeking to enter into a Personal Services Contract with 24/7 Property Maintenance to organize two mobile chipping events, one for City of Omak residents and another for Crumbacher Community residents. The City of Omak event is scheduled to take place between April 29 and May 1, while the Crumbacher event is set for May 6. 24/7 Property Maintenance will be responsible for

completing the work, with payment not exceeding \$6,403.30. In Omak, the wood chips will be deposited in Eastside Park, while in Crumbacher, they will either be spread onto participants' property or dumped in a designated location. If there is a need to remove the chips from Eastside Park, the City of Omak will handle this under an interlocal agreement between the city and the district, which is currently being finalized. Edd Townsend moved to approve the 24/7 Property Maintenance Personal Services Contract for the City of Omak and Crumbacher Chipping Events and authorized Craig Nelson to sign it. Phillip Dart seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Vaughan Irrigation Efficiency Cost-Share Contract – Jordana reported that Lynda Vaughan's property, known as the Stean Farm, is located approximately one-third of a mile south of Winthrop. Bordered by Highway 20 and Witte Road to the west, and the Methow River on the east, the 19.4-acre agricultural field is separated from the river by a riparian area left unfarmed. The Stean family has farmed this piece of land since 1962, and it has been under a conservation easement since 2003. The Vaughan project aims to replace an outdated and inefficient handline irrigation system. Due to the system's advanced age and the absence of a proper pumping plant, the owners struggle to irrigate effectively. This project is predicted to create a 67% improvement in efficiency. Having recently inherited the farm, the property owner is unable to farm herself and is seeking to lease the land to a local farmer to maintain its agricultural status. However, a functional irrigation system is essential for this purpose; without it, the property risks falling out of agricultural use. The project entails the installation of two pivots, irrigation pipelines, and a pumping plant capable of serving the new system. The total project cost amounts to \$159,076.39, with a 75% cost share totaling \$119,307.30. District staff implemented a ranking process for Irrigation Efficiencies Grant Program applications. Among the six applicants that advanced to phase two of the ranking process for the fiscal year 2024-2025, the Vaughan project secured the second rank. On March 11, 2024, staff were notified by WSCC Program Manager Jon Culp that the project was approved, and the award notification was received on March 21, 2024. Phillip Dart moved to approve the Vaughan Irrigation Efficiency Cost-Share Contract and authorize Craig Nelson to sign it once the cooperator has signed the contract. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

David Evans & Associates Survey Services Contract – Jordana reported that the Chewuch Canal Company (CCC) piping project has progressed beyond the initial concept stage and is transitioning into the design and planning phase. The next step required to advance the project is to enlist a survey company to perform a topographical survey and easement mapping. Following the Request for Qualifications process, the firm David Evans and Associates (DEA) was selected for this task. The district and DEA have negotiated the project scope and budget, which includes a topographic survey of the CCC canal from diversion to Pearrygin Lake for \$41,900.00 and the boundary/easement mapping based on provided title reports for \$54,300.00, totaling the contract at \$96,200.00. Currently, the contract terms are still being determined and require approval by the district's Grants & Contracts Director, Kim Kogler. The topographic survey needs to take place in mid-April before the ditch is filled with water for the season. Phillip Dart moved to approve the Contract with David Evans & Associates to perform survey services for the Chewuch Canal Company piping project and authorize Craig Nelson to sign the contract after it was approved by Kim Kogler. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Water Bank Update – Jordana reported that the Barkley amendment, aimed at incorporating a second grant into the existing one, is nearing completion. Aspect has reviewed and implemented the requested language adjustments. However, there are budget and task changes that need consideration and review. Kim and Jordana will assess the edited amendment and proposed task changes. They will also work on merging the budgets for the two grants next week. Jordana added that the goal is to have everything ready for review by the planning group on the coming Wednesday. Staff sought guidance on task responsibilities from Ecology. Ecology advised that while the questions were relevant, it was premature to provide answers due to the potential scenarios that may arise. They suggested scheduling a meeting between the district and Ecology staff after Barkley proceeds with making the right ready for sale. At that time, necessary steps can be determined, and the amendment can be adjusted if needed. Jordana ended by adding that the Lake Sullivan application has been submitted, and Aspect had a meeting with Scott Turner at the Office of Columbia River to discuss the next steps. An update on this progress will be provided to the planning team at next week's meeting.

Conservation Celebration Committee – Emmy reported that six awards had been ordered for the event. She printed out a list of the people who had already received an invitation and gave the board members extra invitations to hand out.

New Business:

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Annual Review of RCW 89.08 – Craig reported that the Washington State Conservation Commission recommends that conservation district board members review RCW 89.08, also known as the Conservation District Act, on an annual basis. This review is crucial to ensure that elected officials and other decision-makers are familiar with the district authorities outlined in enabling legislation. A thorough review of the RCW was conducted, and no questions or concerns were raised during the process.

District Branding Policy – Craig presented a draft of the district branding policy for the board's review. The draft policy included guidelines for using and wearing the logo/brand gear and equipment, as well as the purchase procedure. Phillip Dart moved to adopt the changes to the Okanogan Conservation District Operations Manual effective April 1, 2024. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Annual Work Plan – Craig presented the annual work plan draft to the board for their feedback.

Resolution 2024 – 02 Opting Out of Tiered Incentives Program – Craig reported that the Washington State Conservation Commission adopted the program rules for their new Riparian Grant Program at a special meeting on February 28, 2024. The Riparian Grant Program includes a Tiered Incentives Program that proposes to offer eligible landowners annual payments for

removing riparian areas from production for a minimum of ten years. Currently, there is no provision in the program rules to guarantee funding for paying the landowners beyond the current biennium. It is unclear to district staff how the liability for future annual payments will be handled and what specifically our liability will be to make those payments. The program rules allow conservation district boards to opt out of the Tiered Incentive Program before accepting funds from the parent Riparian Grant Program for any project. Opting out may be done on a per-biennium basis and does not impact our eligibility, prioritization, or ranking for other funding requests in the Riparian Grant Program. Phillip Dart moved to approve Resolution 2024-02 Opting Out of Tiered Incentives Program and authorize Steve Colvin to sign the resolution. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Steve Colvin adjourned the meeting at 8:22 PM.

Summary of Motions

Phillip Dart moved to approve the agenda as amended. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Phillip Dart moved to approve the March 7, 2024 board meeting minutes as presented. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Phillip Dart moved to approve Treasurer's Report #851 as presented. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Steve Colvin moved to approve the use of \$9,750.00 of NRI funding for the Hashknife Cost-Share Contract. Phillip Dart seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Phillip Dart moved to authorize Craig Nelson to sign the Rosenblatt Hazard Tree Cost-Share Agreement when it is ready. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Steve Colvin moved to authorize Craig Nelson to sign the Wolf Creek BC LLC Cost-Share Agreement once it is ready. Phillip Dart seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

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Phillip Dart moved to approve the Loup Loup Creek Restoration Design Grant Agreement Amendment #4 and authorize Craig Nelson to sign it. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Phillip Dart moved to approve Amendment #1 to the Contract with Confluence Environmental Company and authorized Craig Nelson to sign it. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Phillip Dart moved to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with the City of Omak and authorized Craig Nelson to sign any resulting supplemental statements of work. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Edd Townsend moved to approve the Fonseca Forestry Purchased Services Contract for the Nespelem Chipping Event and authorized Craig Nelson to sign it. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Edd Townsend moved to approve the 24/7 Property Maintenance Personal Services Contract for the City of Omak and Crumbacher Chipping Events and authorized Craig Nelson to sign it. Phillip Dart seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Phillip Dart moved to approve the Vaughan Irrigation Efficiency Cost-Share Contract and authorize Craig Nelson to sign it once the cooperator has signed the contract. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Phillip Dart moved to approve the Contract with David Evans & Associates to perform survey services for the Chewuch Canal Company piping project and authorize Craig Nelson to sign the contract after it was approved by Kim Kogler. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Phillip Dart moved to adopt the changes to the Okanogan Conservation District Operations Manual effective April 1, 2024. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Phillip Dart moved to approve Resolution 2024-02 Opting Out of Tiered Incentives Program and authorize Steve Colvin to sign the resolution. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Lorah Super
Chair

Date

Becky Drenner
Finance Director

Date