Okanogan Conservation District
1251 S. Second Ave, Room 102 Okanogan, WA 98840

TO: The Record
SUBJECT: May 12, 2026; Board of Supervisors Meeting
LOCATION: Okanogan Conservation District Office, Okanogan, WA and Remotely via Microsoft Teams and Teleconference
FROM: Natalie Torres, Administrative Specialist

PRESENT:
Lorah Super, Chair
Jerry Asmussen, Vice Chair
Steve Colvin, Supervisor
Phil Dart, Supervisor
Randy Kelley, Associate Supervisor
Ivan Oberg, Associate Supervisor
Dale Swedberg, Associate Supervisor
Terri Williams, Associate Supervisor
Craig Nelson, Executive Director
Kim Kogler, Operations Director
Jordana Ellis, Programs Director
Natalie Torres, Administrative Specialist
Rosalie Powell, Outreach & Communication Specialist
Eli Loftis, Forests & Wildfire Lead
Thomas Lecicester, Range Planner
Scott Scroggie, NRCS
Amber Jackson, ECY
Michelle Martin

Meeting Call to Order: Lorah Super called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. She completed a roll call of Supervisors, Associate Supervisors, staff, partners, and the public.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Agenda Approval: Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the agenda. Steve Colvin seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Phil Dart moved to approve board meeting minutes. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report #876, which covers the checking account activity from April 1, 2026, to April 30, 2026, inclusive, was presented for the Board's approval. The following checks/payroll/direct withdrawals/electronic payments were approved for payment:

The payroll deposits for this period include two direct deposits: one covering April 1-15, 2026, in the amount of $33,096.89, and another for April 16-30, 2026, totaling $33,723.32. The combined total of payroll deposits is $66,820.21.
Payroll deductions for this period amount to $40,532.70. The HCA payment check (13091) totaled $16,592.56, and quarterly payments made during this period amounted to $6, 640.91. Altogether, the total payroll-related transactions for this period amount to $130,586.38.

Checks issued during this timeframe include numbers 13092 through 13133. The total claims for checks amount to $66,035.89. Additionally, EFT debits, general ledger adjustments, and credit card payments total $4,779.66. The combined total of claims paid or processed is $70,815.55.

Outstanding expenses remaining total $61,957.57.

The beginning balance of the checking account was $312,213.27. During this period, deposits totaling $111,834.01 were made, and reconciled withdrawals amounted to $195,502.95. After accounting for all transactions, the ending balance in the checking account is $228,544.33.

Craig Nelson presented the Treasurer's Report #876. Steve Colvin moved to approve Treasurer's Report #876. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Supervisor Reports:

Phil Dart – Phil shared that conditions remain much the same as last month, with continued hot and dry weather. Groundwater is nonexistent, and three lakes are already at levels typically seen in August. Two of those lakes, which normally serve as early spring water resources, are dry.

He noted that water hauling will likely continue throughout the summer unless significant rainfall occurs. While the ground remains wet deeper down, wind has dried out the surface. Grass is growing, and he expressed hope that conditions will not repeat those of 2015. He added that a few drops of rain were received yesterday.

Steve Colvin – Steve shared that conditions are hot and dry. He noted they are finally catching up and currently have three people working full time. He also shared that they had to cut the entire vineyard and start over with, but that things are now moving in a positive direction.

Jerry Asmussen – Jerry shared that there are plenty of snakes in the area. He noted that there was frost yesterday morning, and a cloudburst on Friday afternoon, which he experienced at the northern extent of the area. He added that grass at higher elevations is not growing.

Lorah Super – Lorah shared that she returned home on April 15th and had to begin irrigation and mowing earlier than usual due to dry conditions. She also noted some MVIE system hiccups.

She shared that she was selected as Grand Marshal for 49ers Day, which she considers a great honor.

Lorah also provided an update on the International Feasibility Study, noting ongoing meetings, a series of public meetings planned for the week of July 6th, and continued work related to the Osoyoos Watershed transition.

Michelle Martin – Michelle shared that the first Enloe Dam bird survey has been completed, with the goal of collecting baseline data prior to dam removal. She noted that more birds are expected to arrive, as many species have not yet returned.

Associate Supervisor Reports:
Ivan Oberg – Ivan shared that conditions are dry up on the hill. He noted that some grasses are performing better than expected, with native grasses appearing to handle the dry conditions particularly well. He also provided an update on fencing efforts.

Dale Swedberg – Dale reported that Andy Jones' property was selected for a Learn and Burn event. The classroom portion was held on April 11th, and while the burn did not occur the following day as originally planned, a small prescribed burn of a few acres was eventually completed. Despite a wind reversal that resulted in participants spending some time in the smoke, the burn was successful and provided a good introduction to prescribed fire.

Dale also noted that another prescribed burn was conducted in the Methow. Conditions were greener than ideal, but the burn went well. He emphasized the value of increasing the use of prescribed fire and expressed interest in involving local fire districts and educating volunteer firefighters.

Randy Kelley – Randy shared that the Conservation Celebration went well and that he enjoyed the event.

Staff Reports:
Craig shared a revised MOU with NRCS for review and noted it is requested for signature by June 18th. He indicated additional edits are being prepared for review with staff and partners, with an updated version to be circulated soon.

He reminded board members to complete setup of district email accounts for business use, with a goal of full implementation by the end of June.

He reported that Thomas Leicester has joined Okanogan CD as the Range Planner and shared that staff are currently reviewing references for Agriculture Lead applicants. He also noted the Agriculture Planner position remains open following Taylor George's departure on 05/08, with outreach to recent applicants underway.

Finally, Craig shared that WACD is seeking input through legislative surveys related to district elections and governance, including topics such as filing requirements, term lengths, and eligibility criteria, and asked for board feedback on these issues.

Thomas introduced himself to the board and briefly shared his previous work experience.

Rosalie announced that thank-you cards are available for community members who helped with the Conservation Celebration and encouraged board members to sign them. She also shared that a logo wear order is being placed and asked anyone with needs to notify Emmy via email.

Additionally, Rosalie requested quick board feedback on the Conservation Celebration and offered a physical copy of a survey for those who would like to complete it.

NRCS Report

Scott Scrogie – Scott thanked Okanogan CD for recognizing two NRCS employees at the Conservation Celebration. He noted that the MOU under review is a national agreement and should be considered as such.

He provided a brief update on the Local Work Group, noting good attendance and an overall successful process, with ongoing discussions related to program applications and priorities.

Scott reported completion of the first round of FY26 funding, with strong participation across the area and no additional national funding currently available.

He noted that additional funding opportunities may be forthcoming and encouraged interested parties to reach out.

He also referenced current regional conditions and emphasized the importance of preparedness heading into the summer season.

Partner Reports

There were no partner reports.

Review, Approve and Sign Contracts and Conservation Plans:
USDA Farm to School Award FY26 – Craig shared that the FY2026 Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant was awarded, providing $500,000 to support a project focused on three main goals: strengthening connections between local producers and school nutrition programs to bring more local food into cafeterias, expanding agricultural education efforts in Okanogan County, and increasing student access to both local foods and food system learning opportunities. The funding will go to Classroom in Bloom and the Oroville School District, which will partner on implementing the project. Steve Colvin moved to approve the Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant and authorized the Executive Director to sign the contract. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

2026 Title III Agreement – Eli shared that the Okanogan Conservation District was awarded $49,315 in Title III funding from Okanogan County. The funds will support the district's chipping and green waste events from June through December 2026, covering expenses such as staff time, overhead, and professional services needed to carry out the events. Phil Dart moved to approve the agreement with Okanogan County for the 2026 Title III award and authorized the Executive Director to sign the final agreement once it is ready for signature. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative Recommitment – Eli shared that the North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative is in its biennial recommitment period, allowing recurring members to either recommit or withdraw. Since the last recommitment in 2024, Okanogan Conservation District's involvement has grown significantly, particularly through increased work with the Methow Ranger District on forest projects, upcoming events, collaborative governance, and U.S. Forest Service activities. Recommitting would continue the district's participation for the next two years, with Eli Loftis serving as the designated representative and Craig Nelson as the alternate. Jerry Asmussen moved to recommitment the district to the North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative and authorized the Executive Director to sign the recommitment letter. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

American Forests Contract – Eli shared that, following the success of the initial pilot agreement for post-fire reforestation assistance, American Forests would like to contract with Okanogan Conservation District again. The agreement would fund staff time and related costs to create forest stewardship plans and post-fire reforestation prescriptions for five landowners. District staff would conduct outreach, enroll eligible participants, and complete site visits to develop reforestation plans aligned with both American

Forests' resilient reforestation template and landowner goals. The agreement provides up to $62,500 in funding to the district through December 31, but does not include direct financial assistance or cost-share funding for landowners. Steve Colvin moved to approve the contract with American Forests and authorized the Executive Director or Board Chair to sign the agreement. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Interlocal Agreement Okanogan CD – City of Okanogan – Jordana shared that Okanogan Conservation District and the City of Okanogan are proposing an Interlocal Agreement to collaborate and prioritize natural resource conservation efforts. The agreement would support joint work on projects and would remain in effect for 10 years unless both parties agree to extend it. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the Interlocal Agreement and authorized the Board Chair or Executive Director to sign the agreement. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Okanogan CD UAS-Drone Policy – Jordana shared that staff have expanded the district's technological capabilities and are proposing a new policy to guide the safe use of small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (drones). The policy would establish standard operating procedures, safety practices, oversight requirements, and record-keeping standards for drone operations conducted by Okanogan Conservation District staff. Its purpose is to ensure compliance with FAA regulations, district policy, and applicable state and local laws while promoting safe and secure drone use. Steve Colvin moved to approve the drone policy as presented. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

<u>Old Business:</u>
Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Water Bank Update – Jordana shared that the first acquisition has passed Ecology review and a decision has been issued, resulting in 58.25 consumptive use with a 2.55-acre-foot adjustment.

The next step is the public comment period, followed by a third-party appeal window, which is expected to conclude on July 21st.

She noted that a closing date with Barkley is still being negotiated, and required documentation for both closings is currently under review by Ecology's legal team. She also has a meeting scheduled with Jessica later in the week to outline strategy for completing both acquisitions.

Additionally, she shared plans to advance the Master Trust water right agreement by requesting a working session with Ecology to collaboratively finalize outstanding details.

New Business:
Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Bonaparte Meadows Support – Craig shared that efforts to acquire and protect the Bonaparte Meadows property are continuing under the leadership of Okanogan Land Trust, in partnership with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Trout Unlimited, and Okanogan Conservation District. Okanogan Land Trust has led grant applications and a capital campaign to build funding and public support for the acquisition.

He also noted that the district previously made a verbal commitment of up to $250,000 from the Aquatics and Habitat Fund to support the purchase, with conditions that the associated water rights be acquired for the district's water bank, that reasonable public access be maintained, and that the property be available for educational use by school groups. Although the water rights have since been relinquished, the district can still request the remaining conditions. Okanogan Land Trust is now asking the district to formalize its funding commitment through a letter that can help secure additional support from other funders. No motion was issued by the Board.

Resolution 2026-02 Contracting Exemption – Craig shared that Washington conservation districts are required to follow state contracting laws, but state law does not address every situation specific to conservation districts. In those cases, guidance from the State Auditor's Office is for districts to rely on their own policies. He explained that the district's current policy does not address situations where no bids are received and requires a formal resolution to deviate from policy once the bidding process has started. To avoid restarting the process, Craig drafted a resolution that would allow the Executive Director to directly contact law firms and enter into a contract for general legal services once a qualified firm meeting the district's criteria is identified. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve Resolution 2026-02 Contract Exemption. Steve Colvin seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Board Governance – Craig shared that the district is continuing its review of board and organizational governance and is seeking guidance from the board on the governance model it wants to adopt and formalize in policy for greater clarity for current and future board members and staff. He also plans to request formal approval of an updated decision matrix developed with input from Kim and Jordana, noting that some proposed changes will require policy updates. Craig is asking the board to authorize the Executive Director to revise portions of the matrix that are not under board responsibility, while any board-designated responsibilities remain under board control. In addition, discussions will begin on the role and use of the board Personnel

Committee to support development of a clear policy outlining how and when the committee should be utilized. No motion was issued by the Board.

Lorah Super adjourned the meeting at 8:24 PM.

Summary of Motions

Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the agenda. Steve Colvin seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Phil Dart moved to approve board meeting minutes. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Steve Colvin moved to approve Treasurer's Report #876. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Steve Colvin moved to approve the Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant and authorized the Executive Director to sign the contract. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Phil Dart moved to approve the agreement with Okanogan County for the 2026 Title III award and authorized the Executive Director to sign the final agreement once it is ready for signature. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously

Jerry Asmussen moved to recommitment the district to the North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative and authorized the Executive Director to sign the recommitment letter. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Steve Colvin moved to approve the contract with American Forests and authorized the Executive Director or Board Chair to sign the agreement. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the Interlocal Agreement and authorized the Board Chair or Executive Director to sign the agreement. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Steve Colvin moved to approve the drone policy as presented. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Jerry Asmussen moved to approve Resolution 2026-02 Contract Exemption. Steve Colvin seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

7/14/26		7-14-26	
Lorah Super	Date	Natalie Torres	Date
Chair		Administrative Specialist	