



# Okanogan Conservation District

1251 S. Second Ave, Room 102

Okanogan, WA 98840

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**TO:** The Record  
**SUBJECT:** September 1, 2020 Board of Supervisors Meeting  
**LOCATION:** Teleconference – (509) 422-0855, ext. 7  
**FROM:** Jess McDaniel, Administrative Assistant

**PRESENT:**

Ivan Oberg, District Chair  
Albert Roberts, District Auditor  
Steve Colvin, Member  
Gerri Oberg, Associate Supervisor  
Bob Clark, Associate Supervisor  
Craig Nelson, Executive Director  
Becky Drenner, Finance Director

Amy Martin, Conservation Director  
Kirsten Cook, Community Outreach Director  
Kim Kogler, Education Specialist  
Jess McDaniel, Administrative Assistant  
Mike Baden, WSCC  
Sarah Troutman, NRCS

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

**Agenda Approval:** Albert Roberts moved to approve the agenda as presented. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes:** Steve Colvin moved to approve the August 4, 2020 board meeting minutes as presented. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report #808,** which covers the checking account activity from August 5, 2020 to September 1, 2020, inclusive was presented for the Board's approval. The following checks/payroll direct withdrawals/electronic payments were approved for payment:

Checks – numbers 11655 – 11660 totaling \$18,628.29.

Payroll direct withdrawal, including Rachel McClure's Vacation/Sick Leave payout - numbers ACH3825 – ACH3835 totaling \$14,126.10.

Electronic payments - numbers EFT2750 – EFT2762 totaling \$23,788.21.

Deposits totaling \$60,854.70 were made.

Albert Roberts moved to approve Treasurer's Report #808. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Supervisor Reports:**

**Ivan Oberg** – Ivan reported that they are drilling a new well in the garden and it is quite expensive.

**Albert Roberts** – Albert reported that it is dry. He added there was enough rain on Sunday night in his area to keep the dust from blowing for half an hour so he opened the gates and let the cows out to eat, but they wanted in the next morning. Creeks are drying out, but a few springs still have water in them so not having to haul water yet. Cutting starts next week. It is growing good and this is great haying weather. Other than that, their house is nearly done.

**Steve Colvin** – Steve reported that business has picked up because of the ability to work outside, which is all they do. It is really dry. He missed last meeting because he's been baling straw. Cattlemen in the south were out of feed so he has been very busy.

**Associate Supervisor Reports:**

Bob Clark did not have anything to add.

**Staff Report:**

Craig reported that he coordinated a call amongst multiple federal, state, and local natural resource agencies regarding post-wildfire concerns on the Palmer Fire. The virtual meeting had about two dozen attendees and the focus was on what each agency was looking to do in the coming weeks and months. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has requested a BARC map, which is the first step to determining soil burn severity. Craig reached out to Leslie Michel who may be able to assist with ground truthing the BARC map, which will then become the Soil Burn Severity map.

NRCS has been informally contacted regarding the Emergency Watershed Protection Program. After the Soil Burn Severity map is complete and some hydrologic analyses have been run, they can begin doing site assessments if they deem structures could be at risk. Craig has been in contact with the Conservation Commission as well to determine if they will be able to provide the state match. That is a little unclear at this time, but the hope is that they can squeeze some funds in the next biennium budget for the match if it is necessary.

The District continues to put messaging out about post-wildfire debris flows and flash flooding. Staff have received some calls inquiring about potential assistance, and to date they have mostly referred folks to federal programs such as FSA.

The Okanogan Watershed Planning Unit is reviewing a revised version of the watershed plan addendum this week. Aspect Consulting took the handful of written comments they received from Planning Unit members last month and made changes with comments that had specific requested changes. Some comments were more generic and therefore impossible for the consultant to do something productive with. Those comments were shared with the Planning Unit, along with the revised copy showing the proposed changes from their fellow members. Thursday, September 3, the Planning Unit will discuss those changes and possibly others they would like to see and hopefully give the County Planning Department the authority to move forward with a SEPA determination, and public comment on the plan. Comments received through that process would then be considered by the Planning Unit at their scheduled October 1 meeting. If they can approve the document at that meeting it will go to the Initiating Governments for their adoption in October and the County to formally submit the addendum to Ecology by October 31.

Becky reported that she and Craig have started the budget process for 2021. She has worked on getting worksheets out to planners. Becky has made some upgrades to the spreadsheet for planners to fill out with the hopes that the new format will allow the budgets to be more of a tool to use throughout the year. She added the Board should see a draft in November.

Amy reported that she and Hannah, and others, are working on the Ecology application due in the fall. The plan is to continue to do work around Palmer Lake waterline and then provide more TA for the burned area through the Ecology NPS grant application in the fall. Staff has been receiving TA calls or post-fire advice for tree health and seeding. Staff is taking fire intake forms and looking for more funds to provide more assistance, which has been done mostly via telephone, but staff is doing the best they can to assist over the phone.

Amy reported about the first pollinator planting project for Stina Booth, who has a small orchard near Carlton. The orchard is located near an old canal that has become a little overgrown. However, it has potential for pollinator habitat planting, which would include native seed and shrubs to provide blooming native flowers throughout the season and also nesting and overwintering habitat. The orchard rows will be planted with clover. Ricardo worked with seed companies and local agencies to pick good quality and good value plants and seeds. The project will be proposed as a 50:50 cost share and include irrigation and site preparation. The agreement for this project, which will be funded by VSP, will likely come to the Board for review next month and then implemented in the winter. Amy concluded by saying this project is a good starter project to prepare for the WSDA grant coming on in the fall.

Kirsten reported that she is working hard on the DNR FAC project and working with Kim on outreach.

### **Review, Approve and Sign Contracts and Conservation Plans**

**DNR FAC Pilot 2020 Amendment** – Staff have amended the scope and budget of the DNR FAC Pilot Project due to COVID-19. Changes had to be made to the data collection process from in-person meetings to phone interviews, which required a new approach and increased staff time to manage the change in process. Consolidating budget items and tasks was necessary to simplify reporting. Moving all facilitator expenses into the “contractual” budget category was necessary for consistency with internal tracking systems. Albert Roberts moved to authorize Craig Nelson to sign the DNR FAC Pilot amendment. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**WAFAC 2020 Amendment** – Staff have amended the scope and budget of the WAFAC grant due to COVID-19. The changes included moving travel expenses to staff time, changing deliverables from in-person attendance to virtual attendance, and extending the contract term to 6/30/21. Albert Roberts moved to approve that Ivan Oberg sign the WAFAC amendment. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and motion passed unanimously.

**Classroom in Bloom Interlocal Agreement** – The District received the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Services Farm to School Implementation Grant. Using funds from this grant, and in partnership with Classroom in Bloom, the District will

collaborate with school districts, local organizations, and community members to implement and expand school gardens and improve local food procurement and agricultural education efforts in Okanogan County. The project will increase garden educator capacity, expand agricultural education, develop STEP agricultural curriculum, and expand local food procurement efforts. This interlocal agreement outlines this partnership and defines processes for match, eligible expenses, payments, and responsibilities. Albert Roberts moved to authorize Ivan Oberg to sign the interlocal agreement between the District and Classroom in Bloom for the F2S grant. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and motion passed unanimously.

### **NRCS Report**

Sarah Troutman reported that they are still wrapping up EQIP obligations. NRCS continues to obligate funds in a 3-county area. Those interested in signing up for EQIP will need to sign up early this year. Regarding status of operations, all three offices are in USDA phase 2, not to be confused with Washington state phase 2. What this means for the offices is that the doors remain locked, customers are not in the office, but most staff are returning to work. There has been no word when phase 3 will be implemented, which would allow customers to come into the offices by appointment only. Sarah emphasized the point that, once phase 3 is reached, they will likely hold there for some time because after phase 3 they lose special authority for staff to telework, even if they are at high risk.

Sarah went on to say that NRCS is moving forward with task orders with more money in EQIP. She is hopeful that they can get funds going to cultural resources and that it becomes more of a state priority. She concluded by saying there is potential for task orders, but they will have to wait and see how the Commission ends up funding work.

Finally, on the personnel front, NRCS has a new area conservationist who is teleworking from Montana. Stan has been on detail to Colville as their area conservationist. Isaac welcomed a new baby so he will be out of the office for 2-3 months. Hannah is expecting her new arrival soon so will be on maternity leave. This means the Okanogan office will be a bit short handed for a while.

### **Partner Reports**

Mike Baden reported that budget discussions are continuing. Still just not sure where things are going to go in the current fiscal year, though there will likely not be any action until after the new year. The Commission is hoping there are no more cuts coming down the line. The hope is for federal money to come in, or revenues that are better than expected. The Commission is holding on to funds to work with Task Orders because those are so beneficial. Leading into the next biennium, 15% cuts are expected to carry forward. The Commission is talking about how the cuts will be handled and what the budget cuts might look like. The chances of the implementation grants being reduced from where they are right now is dependent on what strings are attached, such as the orca funding. There have been rumors that revenues are greater than expected so that is good, but everyone will have to wait and see if that holds true. They are putting together budget packages, including conservation TA packages, which are set to go forward as well as CREP and Irrigation Efficiencies. Mike wanted to emphasize that any scenarios around budget cuts protects the Task Order system because everyone agrees the partnership is such an important one. The Commission will be helping where and when they can

with fire recovery, but the funds will likely have to come from the legislature. Mike eluded to the fact that there might be one option through NRI to help fund with fire recovery.

Additionally, Mike added that today was the last day for comments regarding elections, stating that submitted comments may affect upcoming elections processes. The Commission did approve previously required elections training for at least one district staff, preferably the elections officer; the training has been set for October 2<sup>nd</sup>. It will be recorded.

Lastly, Mike wanted to express his appreciation for the District's addition of a discussion around the admission of WDFW to the Commission.

**Public Comment:**

There was no public comment.

**Old Business:**

**Review Executive Director Actions Taken Under Resolution 2020-02** – No actions were taken under this executive order.

**Other** – There was no other old business.

**New Business:**

**WACD Resolution Topics** – Craig recommended the board consider a resolution that would request or encourage NRCS leadership to shift more of their trainings to on-line forums, specifically for training time that is generally conducted in a classroom setting. He explained that in the four-day conservation planner training, he and his classmates only spent about 6-8 hours in the field. Doing much of the classroom part of this training remotely could save a lot of money that is spent on travel. It would also allow for more options for employees to receive training. Steve Colvin and Albert Roberts agreed that a resolution such as this would be beneficial.

**WSCC Input Request on WDFW Membership to the Commission** – Craig reported that the Washington State Conservation Commission received an inquiry from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife regarding changing the Commission's membership to include WDFW as a full voting member. Craig suggested that the District submit comments that are in favor of this on two conditions. First, that the Conservation Commission is also offered a seat on the Fish and Wildlife Commission and secondly, another landowner/farmer/urban ag/nonaffiliated position is added to the Conservation Commission to balance the agency to private landowner ratio. Steve Colvin moved to authorize Craig Nelson to submit comments in favor of adding WDFW as a full voting member to the Conservation Commission. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Ivan Oberg adjourned the meeting at 7:14 PM.

Summary of Motions

Albert Roberts moved to approve the agenda as presented. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Steve Colvin moved to approve the August 4, 2020 board meeting minutes as presented. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Albert Roberts moved to approve Treasurer’s Report #808. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.


Albert Roberts moved to authorize Craig Nelson to sign the DNR FAC Pilot amendment. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Albert Roberts moved to approve that Ivan Oberg sign the WAFAC amendment. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and motion passed unanimously.

Albert Roberts moved to authorize Ivan Oberg to sign the interlocal agreement between the District and Classroom in Bloom for the F2S grant. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and motion passed unanimously.

Steve Colvin moved to authorize Craig Nelson to submit comments in favor of adding WDFW as a full voting member to the Conservation Commission. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

 10/6/20  
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Ivan Oberg                      Date  
Chair

 10/6/20  
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Becky Drenner                      Date  
Finance Director