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

TO: The Record
SUBJECT: September 4, 2025; Board of Supervisors Meeting
LOCATION: Okanogan Conservation District Office, Okanogan, WA and Remotely via Microsoft Teams and Teleconference
FROM: Natalie Torres, Administrative Assistant

PRESENT:

Lorah Super, Chair
Jerry Asmussen, Supervisor
Steve Colvin, Supervisor
Phil Dart, Supervisor
Edd Townsend, Supervisor
Ivan Oberg, Associate Supervisor
Randy Kelley, Associate Supervisor
Craig Nelson, Executive Director
Kim Kogeler, Programs Director

Tanya Margerison, Finance Lead
Natalie Torres, Administrative Specialist
Jordana Ellis, Water Resources Lead
Jack Owen, Water Resources Technician
Eli Loftis, Forests & Wildfire Lead
Sam Nurmi, Forests & Wildfire Planner
Chevelle Yeckel, Aquatics & Habitat Lead
Emily Bustamante, Youth Education Lead
Emmy Engle, Communications & Outreach Lead
Taylor George, Ag. & Range Planner

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: Phil Dart moved to approve the agenda as amended. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Phil Dart moved to approve board meeting minutes as amended. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report #868, which covers the checking account activity from August 1, 2025, to August 31, 2025, inclusive, was presented for the Board's approval. The following checks/payroll/direct withdrawals/electronic payments were approved for payment:
Two direct deposit payroll, 08/01/2025 – 08/15/2015 totaling $32,386.19 and 08/16/2025 – 08/31/2025 totaling $31,568.07.
One Leave Buy Outs totaling $13,701.66.
Payroll deductions totaling $66,570.11

Checks – numbers 12904 - 12925 totaling $23,592.47.
Electronic Credit Card payment – totaling $3,419.80

Deposits totaling $960,870.71 have been made.
Reconciled withdrawals amount to $191,021.86.
Remaining outstanding expenses total $121,566.19.

Tanya Margerison presented the Treasurer's Report #868. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve Treasurer's Report #868. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Supervisor Reports:

Phil Dart – Phil stated he has completed his third cutting, and it looks like there will be a need for a fourth cutting. Additionally, he shared he's experienced little rain, and it has been the hottest it has been all summer. This afternoon, it was 92 degrees at his place. He's looking forward to the potential rain next week.

Edd Townsend – Edd expressed that it continues to be hot and dry. Pastures appear to be bone dry, and stock ponds are beginning to dry up as well. Edd did mention that the cattle are in good shape; they've experienced a decent year.

Steve Colvin – Steve shared that the vineyard is being rebuilt. The crop is currently at 50% and he is expecting a great next year. Right now, it is a rebuilding and growing year.

Jerry Asmussen – Jerry shared that although the weather remains hot, it is fair week. He noted experiencing spotty rain mid-month, with one end of the mountain receiving none while the other recorded three-tenths of an inch. Antoine Valley Ranch received an inch of rain. Jerry also shared that the grass is drying up, up high.

Lorah Super – Lorah expressed concern for wildlife in the heat. She also shared that she picked up hay over the weekend, which was loaded in just half an hour, and plans are in place to unload it this week. Lastly, she mentioned that she unintentionally harvested grapes—after noticing deer eating them, she decided to cover the plants and was pleasantly surprised to discover grapes.

Associate Supervisor Reports:

Randy Kelley – Randy shared that his garden is doing well; he currently has a butternut squash monster, his tomatoes are beginning to fade, and his carrots are doing fine.

Ivan Oberg – Ivan reported that the grass is drying up.

Staff Reports:

Craig reported on discussions regarding how Okanogan CD (OCD) can apply its experience with pump screens to support the Enloe Project. He noted that removing Enloe Dam will require additional maintenance of fish screens in the Okanogan River; therefore, it has been proposed that OCD reach out to cooperators both to share information about the project and to gather input.

Additionally, Craig shared an update on Bonaparte Meadows regarding a potential partnership opportunity involving multiple entities and funding contributions. Discussions are still underway, with decisions expected later in the year. While nothing has been finalized, there may be possibilities related to conservation, acquisition, or water rights. The area in question is considered unique, with potential value for both protection and education.

There was also discussion about other potential water rights in the area. Conversations are ongoing around possible acquisitions, funding opportunities, and how these resources might be managed or applied. While some grant funding has shifted, staff have been directed to continue exploring options.

Lastly, Craig shared that Chevelle Yeckel, the Aquatics and Habitat Lead, will be the Acting Executive Director while both he and Kim Kogler are absent.

Chevelle announced that she has submitted the Ecology 2026 (ECY) grant application. Additionally, Chevelle shared she is planning on coordinating a Palmer community meeting towards the end of September. This meeting will allow the opportunity to share with community members what work was done and what equipment was used.

Eli informed the Board that it has been confirmed that there will be no Tittle 3 funds for 2026. Though on a more positive note, Eli also shared that the FEMA funds have been approved for the next phase.

Taylor reported that the Agriculture and Range Department has also seen a decrease in funds. Additionally, VSP had submitted a total of seven projects, and unfortunately, none were selected. Taylor shared that she and staff still continue to chase grants as technical assistance request calls continue to come in. On a personal note, Taylor announced she is now the assistant volleyball coach for the Omak School District.

Kim shared she has been providing support in the leadership transition of the Conversation District Educator's group to the Washington State Conservation Commission's outreach staff. The Washington State Conservation Commission will now coordinate the group due to budget cuts and no longer having the ability to fund OCD staff time.

Jordana reported that the first round of community drought meetings has been completed and thanked staff and board members for their feedback and attendance. Jordana specifically thanked our Water Resources Technician, Jack Owen, as he was tremendously helpful.

Jordana also shared that with support from Jack and our Aquatics and Habitat Planner, Brant Smith, they were able to update the Irrigation Efficiencies Ranking Tool. Lastly, she informed the Board that the Irrigation Efficiencies Technical Assistance (TA) received a 6th of the funds requested.

Emmy expressed that she was happy to see everyone and felt all of our support, as it has been a hectic couple of weeks, and it will continue to be so in the following month, for personal reasons.

Emmy also shared that she traveled to Spokane, WA, to attend the National Conservation District Employees Association (NCDEA) in-person training. While at NCDEA, Emmy had the opportunity to provide a presentation on social media, which was well-received! Lastly, she mentioned that it is currently Okanogan County Fair week, and everything is going well as staff and volunteers are doing an awesome job.

Sam announced she needs to complete two more HIZ assessments to reach the goal of triple digits.

Tanya shared with the Board that she has been promoted to Finance Lead effective the 1st of September.

NRCS Report
There were no NRCS members present.

Partner Reports
There were no partners present.

Review, Approve and Sign Contracts and Conservation Plans:
Dagnon Irrigation Efficiency Project – Jack shared that Joanne Dagnon owns and leases 73 acres of hay field near Tonasket, currently irrigated with wheel lines. With prior support from Okanogan CD and the SWSE program, a new 75hp turbine pump was installed last year.
The proposed project would replace the old system with three center pivots and 3,060 feet of mainline, along with an irrigation water management plan. This upgrade is projected to save up to 180 acre-feet of water per season, improve farm productivity, and cost $316,838, with 75% cost share (up to $237,628). Okanogan CD staff ranked applicants for the Irrigation Efficiencies Grant Program, and the Dagnon project placed first among eight. Steve Colvin moved to approve the Dagnon Irrigation Efficiency Project and authorized Lorah Super or Craig Nelson to sign the cost share contract, once the award notification is received from WSCC's IEGP program and the cooperator has signed. Phil Dart Seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Walker-Rose Irrigation Efficiency Project - Jack reported on the Rose-Walker project, located on a 37-acre farm along the Methow River between Winthrop and Twisp. The project will replace an aging hand line system and deteriorating mainline on a 9-acre field. Water is supplied by the Barkley Irrigating Company canal, and the cooperator has notified the canal company of anticipated water savings. The proposed upgrades include a 2-tower center pivot, 1,500 feet of new mainline, and an irrigation water management plan. The project is expected to save up to 72 acre-feet of water per season and improve efficiency. Total cost is $93,387, with 75% cost share not to exceed $70,039. Okanogan CD staff ranked this project second among eight applicants for the Irrigation Efficiencies Grant Program for FY 2025–2026. Phil Dart moved to approve the Walker-Rose Irrigation Efficiency Project and authorized Lorah Super or Craig Nelson to sign the cost share contract, once award notification is received from WSCC's IEGP program and the cooperator has signed. Jerry Asmussen Seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Joe Sholz Corral Relocation and Riparian Protection – Taylor reported on a project to relocate a livestock corral away from Pine Creek's riparian area to an upland site. A continuous fence will also be installed to exclude cattle from the creek and surrounding habitat. The total project cost is $146,841.68, with the landowner covering 25%. This is Phase 1, while Phase 2 (riparian planting and reseeding) will occur later through another project or by the landowner. Funding will come from the Voluntary Stewardship Program and/or Commission Natural Resource Inventory funds. Phil Dart moved to approve the Joe Sholz Corral Relocation and Riparian Protection Project and authorized Lorah Super or Craig Nelson to sign the contract once finalized. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Ian Riley Vegetation Management – Taylor reported on a project involving chemical and mechanical treatment of invasive weed species across an 8-acre property, followed by planting to restore the ecological health of the land. The total project cost is $1,821.37, with 75% cost share not to exceed $1,336.03. The landowner will cover 25% of the total cost. Staff secured funding for this project through the Commission's Sustainable Farms and Fields program. Steve Colvin moved to approve the Ian Riley Vegetation Management Project and authorized either Lorah Super or Craig Nelson to sign the presented contract. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

CORRIM Biochar Project Agreement – Eli reported that the Consortium for Research on Renewable Industrial Materials (CORRIM) received a $2 million USFS grant in December 2024 to expand biochar production in Kittitas, Chelan, and Okanogan Counties. CORRIM is proposing to partner with Okanogan CD to implement the Okanogan County portion of the project, including up to $30,000 to support staff time and costs for classroom and field trainings this fall. CORRIM will also provide Okanogan CD with three biochar kilns, supplementing the kiln purchased with FH funding in June. Additional agreements are expected to follow through mid-2027. Edd Townsend moved to authorize Craig Nelson or Lorah Super to sign the CORRIM Biochar Project Agreement once it is ready. Steve Colvin Seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Water Bank Update – Jordana reported that the Hover Water Right Change Application continues to progress with the Okanogan County Water Conservancy Board. The site visit went well, and Aspect is incorporating feedback into the ROE, which is now expected to be ready for the October Conservancy Board meeting. She also shared an update on the development of the Master Trust Water Right Agreement. While Ecology initially planned to draft the agreement without compensating Okanogan CD for prior work, they have since agreed to allow staff to work on aspects related to the first water right acquisition. Regarding the Pine Creek application, Jordana noted that it was denied due to a lack of funding, as funds were re-appropriated during the governor's budget revision. Staff, Aspect, and the County are now identifying alternative funding opportunities. On outreach, the water bank survey is active, though only nine responses have been received so far. Emmy is working with Aspect to launch the water bank website at okwaterbank.org.

WACD Resolutions - Craig reported that the Board discussed two resolutions for presentation at the WACD North Central Area and Annual meetings. One resolution proposes establishing a "Washington Conservation District Day" to recognize the role districts have played since the 1939 Conservation District Law, highlighting their community-based, non-regulatory work in conserving natural resources. The second resolution clarifies the role of the Washington State Conservation Commission under RCW 89.08, emphasizing that the Commission exists to support districts and their supervisors, not to control or direct district programs, ensuring districts can carry out their responsibilities effectively. Steve Colvin moved to approve the WACD Resolutions as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

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

Conservation Celebration – Emmy initiated the discussion of the 2026 Conservation Celebration which is normally done on the Wednesday in the second week of May, following the May board meeting. The potential of a winter meeting or a different venue was brought up, though it was decided it should remain in May and in the same venue for 2026. Though the idea of rotating venues around the county was brought up to possibly begin in 2027.

Aquatics & Habitat Fund - Chevelle reported that the district received $1,000,000 from Kinross Gold through the Buckhorn Mine Settlement to support on-the-ground conservation projects benefiting water quality, land, or wildlife habitat in the Upper Columbia Basin, north of the confluence of the Okanogan and Columbia Rivers. Chevelle, Craig, and Kim presented a draft plan for utilizing these funds, as detailed in the attached document. It was recommended that the Board discuss the Draft Aquatics and Habitat Funding Plan and assign the Water Resource Committee to further develop the next steps. No motion was made.

Lorah Super adjourned the meeting at 8:18 PM.

Summary of Motions

Phil Dart moved to approve the agenda as amended. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Phil Dart moved to approve board meeting minutes as amended. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Jerry Asmussen moved to approve Treasurer's Report #868. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Steve Colvin moved to approve the Dagnon Irrigation Efficiency Project and authorized Lorah Super or Craig Nelson to sign the cost share contract, once the award notification is received from WSCC's IEGP program and the cooperator has signed. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Phil Dart moved to approve the Walker-Rose Irrigation Efficiency Project and authorized Lorah Super or Craig Nelson to sign the cost share contract, once award notification is received from WSCC's IEGP program and the cooperator has signed. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Phil Dart moved to approve the Joe Sholz Corral Relocation and Riparian Protection Project and authorized Lorah Super or Craig Nelson to sign the contract once finalized. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Steve Colvin moved to approve the Ian Riley Vegetation Management Project and authorized either Lorah Super or Craig Nelson to sign the presented contract. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Edd Townsend moved to authorize Craig Nelson or Lorah Super to approve the CORRIM Biochar Project Agreement once it is ready. Steve Colvin seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Steve Colvin moved to approve the WACD Resolutions as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

10/2/2025		10/02/2025	
Lorah Super Chair	Date	Natalie Torres Administrative Assistant	Date