



# Okanogan Conservation District

1251 S. Second Ave, Room 102

Okanogan, WA 98840

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**TO:** The Record  
**SUBJECT:** August 3, 2021; Board of Supervisors Meeting  
**LOCATION:** Okanogan Conservation District Office, Okanogan, WA and Remotely via Microsoft Teams  
**FROM:** Craig Nelson, Executive Director

**PRESENT:**

Ivan Oberg, District Chair – Present	Hannah Coe, Conservation Planner – Phone
Albert Roberts, District Auditor – Present	Ricardo Angel, Natural Resource Tech – Phone
Lorah Super, Member – Phone	Mindy Untalan, Conservation Planner – Phone
Gerri Oberg, Member – Present	Aaron Wold, Conservation Planner – Phone
Bob Clark, Associate Supervisor – Phone	Mike Baden, WSCC – Phone
Craig Nelson, Executive Director – Present	Austin Shero, NRCS - Phone

**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:** Lorah Super moved to approve the agenda as presented. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes:** Lorah Super moved to approve the July 1, 2021, board meeting minutes as presented. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report #819,** which covers the checking account activity from July 2, 2021, to August 3, 2021, inclusive was presented for the Board's approval, the following checks/payroll direct withdrawals/electronic payments were approved for payment:  
Checks – numbers 11788 – 11800 totaling \$255,563.54.  
Two payroll direct withdrawals – numbers ACH4047 – ACH4067 totaling \$32,023.55.  
Electronic payments – numbers EFT2891 – EFT2907 totaling \$30,709.18.  
Deposits totaling \$326,020.47 were made. Albert Roberts moved to approve Treasurer's Report #819. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Supervisor Reports:**

**Lorah Super** – Lorah reported there was supposed to be a USFS tour on July 29 of the Twisp River project, but it was canceled due to fire. Many families have been evacuated in the Methow this summer due to fires. The Cedar Creek Fire may ultimately be a good fire leaving a mosaic of results.

**Albert Roberts** – Albert reported they received a hint of rain at his place to soften the grasses a bit but not much more. Plenty of feed on the landscape.

**Ivan Oberg** – Ivan reported the grasses are getting shorter and so far, the springs are still holding.

**Associate Supervisor Reports:**

No Association Supervisor Reports

**Staff Report:**

Craig reported that he, Amy, and Kim conducted interviews of two candidates for the Communications and Outreach Specialist. There was one clear leader of the two and he has been attempting to complete the reference checks. He said if those go well, he has a few more questions to ask the candidate then a final decision will be made.

Craig also reported that the District will have a booth at the Okanogan County Fair. He and Kim will be meeting soon to discuss booth content and scheduling. He said he would be contacting supervisors about scheduling them for working at the booth. Lorah Super said she would love to work the booth if the District has it's scat display again.

Hannah reported that she has accepted a position with the Department of Ecology. Her last day in the office is August 13. She thanked the board and staff for the opportunity to work at Okanogan CD.

Aaron Wold introduced himself. He's been with the district for two weeks and this is his first meeting. He's looking forward to meeting everyone in person.

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

**Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Board ILA** – Craig informed that the Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Board requested funding to help with post-wildfire weed suppression for the areas affected by the Palmer and Cold Springs fires. Craig stated that he requested funding from the Conservation Commission and that the District has secured \$50,000.00 for this task. To complete the work the District needs an Interlocal Agreement with the Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Board to legally pay them for work. The agreement presented is a draft agreement that will need to be discussed with the Weed Board staff. It is very similar to previous agreements for post-wildfire work but, because of changes in WSCC funding requirements, there are additional things the Weed Board will need to do. Lorah Super moved to authorize the Executive Director to finalize the Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Board ILA for post wildfire weed treatment and sign the agreement when it is ready. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Similkameen Okanogan Watershed Action Team Facilitation Contract FY 2022** – Craig informed that District staff support the SOWAT by organizing presentation and facilitating



meetings. Albert Roberts moved to approve the SOWAT Facilitation Contract for the 2022 fiscal year and authorize Ivan or Craig to sign the agreement. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**NRI Project Ranking** – Craig informed that staff have developed a ranking tool based on current District Long Range Plan goals to score projects for their merit. The ranking tool was needed because staff have several projects in mind and were not sure if there would be the need to exclude a project based on available funding through the Conservation Commission’s Natural Resource Investment program. The highest possible score is 51 points and the projects presented at this evening’s meeting were scored by staff as follows: Green – 25, Olma – 19, Russell – 18, Shallenberger – 15, Gardinier – 15, and Libby Creek – 13. Lorah Super moved to approve the NRI project ranking tool and discuss the rankings as each project is discussed. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Russell Fencing & Planting Project (NRI)** – Craig informed that Dan Russell is improving his property to be more productive for agriculture (pasture grazing) and improve native plants. Some components of this project (fence) will replace infrastructure that burned in the Carlton Complex fire. He currently rotates 6 steers with single strand electric wire. He worked with Ben to plan rotational grazing for 8 to 15 cows (8 to start, increasing as productivity does). He recently worked with NRCS to install troughs in the other pastures and replace his irrigation, including one wiper pivot where the electric fence pastures are proposed. The proposed practices would allow him to improve rotational grazing and upland bird/pollinator habitat. Project is proposed for a 50:50 cost-share percent. Practices/codes: Livestock trough, heavy use area protection, livestock pipeline, fence (electric), fence (four strand barbed), fence (cattle guard).

Notes:

- Livestock pipeline length is short because that field has existing, intact irrigation pipe.
- Ben and Dan discussed technical guidance from University of Nebraska for the roll over gates in the electric fence, which Dan will make. Pivot is wiper style so not all sections need gates
- Critical area planting location is an interior part of the property where deer are not an issue (dogs and agricultural activities are deterrent) but we will monitor for plant protection needs. Area receives water from adjacent irrigation.

Property is between WDFW properties managed as range and a WDFW parcel on Libby Creek riparian area. We will continue working together on improving native plants on other portions of the property, like the decommissioned irrigation ditch along the WDFW land.

Albert Roberts moved to approve the Russell NRI cost-share project, with the exclusion of the NE cattle guard (between pastures 3 and 4) and the assurance that the other cattle guard would be built with eco blocks, ensuring it allows water underneath, authorizing staff to request NRI funding, and authorize Ivan or Craig to sign the cost-share contract. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Austin Olma Spring and Trough Installation (NRI)** – Mindy informed that the project area is owned by Larry and Elizabeth Convis, who are leasing the land to cattle rancher Austin Olma. Currently the District has an Ecology grant to install timber barriers to exclude cattle from Sourdough Creek, located in the project area. Austin Olma proposes installation of water development that will feed an 11-foot diameter tire trough outside of the timber barriers to help

reduce the impact of cattle on the creek upstream and downstream of the project area. Mindy stated the total project cost is \$8,761.28 with a proposed cost share of 75% totaling \$6,570.96 and the remaining 25% will be covered by match. Lorah Super moved to approve the proposed Austin Olma spring and trough installation NRI project on the Convis property, authorize staff to request NRI funding, and authorize Ivan or Craig to sign the cost-share contract. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Libby Creek Community Chipping Event (NRI)** – Mindy informed that District staff will coordinate and hire a contractor for a community chipping event for the Libby Creek watershed private landowners. Mindy stated that the Libby Creek Road is 4 miles from the town of Carlton and comes off state Highway 153. The Libby Creek watershed is a densely forested landscape with steep slopes. There are 42 individual private property owners within the watershed, about 20 of which are full-time residents, 10 part-time residents, and the rest of the private land is forest recreational land; all of the private land borders Forest Service property. The community was affected by the Carlton Complex fire in 2014 and at one point their only access road, Libby Creek Road, was blocked by wildfire. The community is actively working with the Fire Adapted Methow Valley group, Department of Natural Resources, and the Okanogan Conservation District to become recognized as a Firewise USA community through the NFPA program. Coordinating and providing a chipping event will encourage residents to become more wildfire prepared, provide an alternative to burning slash, and contribute to overall forest health. The chipping will be either this Fall or next Spring. Residents will have to prepare and stack their debris in a spot that can be easily accessed by a chipping contractor. The chips will either be dispersed back onto the property or piled for the residents to use as mulch. District staff are requesting \$9,500.00 from WSCC through the NRI program. Estimates include 20 participants from the Libby Creek watershed, each averaging 2 hours of chipper time, the cost of which will be paid for entirely by the grant. Albert Roberts approved the Libby Creek community chipping event funded through the Commission's NRI funds, authorize staff to request NRI funding, and authorize Ivan or Craig to sign the cost-share contract. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Shallenberger Planting Project (NRI)** – Hannah explained that the Shallenberger riparian planting project on No Name Creek was first developed in 2020 using funding from an Ecology non-point source water quality grant. This project site is directly upstream from the Strong planting project that was implemented in the Fall of 2020 using the same Ecology funds and would result in a continuous 1,000-foot stretch of functioning riparian buffer. Hannah went on to say that the No Name Creek watershed, which drains into Omak Lake, has burned several times in the past five years and has therefore experienced severe post-fire flooding and the deposition of substantial sediment. The buffer area of 50 feet is under-vegetated and has patches of bare sandy sediment populated only with sparse weeds. District staff will utilize a variety of native shrubs, avoiding taller trees to accommodate the overhead powerlines. Plants will be installed in clusters for ease of watering with weed control mat at the base. Water will be run to the project site from the small barn at the upstream end of the property to provide irrigation to the plants for the first several summers until plants have established adequately to survive without supplemental watering. The total proposed project cost is \$7,482.26 with 75% of project costs, \$5,610.20, being funded by NRI. The landowner will be responsible for the remaining 25%, \$1,870.07. Lorah Super approved the Shallenberger Planting Project as presented,

authorize staff to request NRI funding, and authorize Ivan or Craig to sign the cost-share contract. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Greene Timber Barriers Cost Share (NRI)** – Hannah informed that the Greene timber barriers project has partial funding from the Department of Ecology as part of the timber barriers grant. This project will protect and restore approximately 1.7 acres of riparian area long 660 feet of ephemeral stream (Pine Creek). Planned project work includes installation of a “jackstraw” timber barrier to exclude cattle. Timber material sourced on site will be utilized to install the timber barrier. Supplemental planting will include a mix of native trees and shrubs. In addition to the riparian plants installed as part of the project work, cattle exclusion from this area will promote revegetation with naturally occurring plants. In addition to the cattle exclusion timber barrier this project includes installation of an off-creek water source. A solar pump will be used to connect the on-site well to an uphill water tank. The storage tank will gravity feed the water trough, which will be located outside the timber barrier. The total project costs are \$30,969.14; Department of Ecology funding covers \$14,395.00, which is 46% of the project cost. District staff are proposing \$8,832.00, 29% of total project costs, come from NRI funding with the remaining 25%, \$7,742.00, being the landowner responsibility. Albert Roberts approved the Greene Timber Barriers NRI Cost Share, authorize staff to request NRI funding, and authorize Ivan or Craig to sign the cost-share contract. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Gardinier Irrigation System (NRI)** – Ricardo informed that the Gardinier’s are located on Toroda Creek Road, north of Wauconda. A failing culvert under the landowner’s driveway would cause Toroda Creek to flood during high flow events. Previously, an above average high-water year caused excessive flooding that washed away their driveway as well as their irrigation pumping system. The pumping station and a section of their mainline was damaged during the flooding. The irrigation system has been out of service for approximately five years and the landowners irrigate 3 pasture fields using lateral move lines. Work on the project would likely begin this Fall. The estimated project cost is \$31,282.92. District staff are proposing 75%, or \$23,462.19, be covered by the Commission’s NRI program and the remainder of the project costs be covered by the landowners. Lorah Super moved to approve the Gardinier Irrigation System cost share project, authorize staff to request NRI funding, and authorize Ivan or Craig to sign the cost-share contract. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

### **NRCS Report**

Austin Shero is the NRCS Area Conservationist in Ephrata. He has not met anyone yet but would like to meet folks as soon as COVID allows. Wanted to introduce himself anyway. He is here to support us and wants to do what he can to help us. Great crew in NCW. Sarah is one of the best and she is definitely motivating her team to take on a big load. She carries about 50% of the programmatic load in the Central Team.

NRCS is doing a disaster signup right now for EQIP. Recognizing that the signup is late in the fiscal year but not in the disaster year for fires and drought. Have folks contact their local office if they have a project.



Know there will be some interest in EWP for our area. Know you are experienced with EWP. Just need a local sponsor then can begin the conversation.

Joint Chiefs proposal was submitted a little over a month ago after getting support from Roylene Comes at Night and USFS Regional Forester. He feels encouraged by the proposal since it has been a couple of years since Washington had a project and there were lot of local partners.

They were able to hire their Pheasants Forever biologist in Waterville. Alex Kunkel started yesterday. They have a direct hire Range Conservationist offer extended and hope to hear within a week or so if it was accepted. Trying to hire a Resource Conservationist in Okanogan. The panel didn't meet criteria so they are searching for new applicants.

Staff are focusing on CSP and EQIP applications. NRCS was able to increase CSP offerings in NC Team for CSP this year. Sarah has been doing a lot of CRP planning for Fiscal Year 2022. Sarah is expecting a pretty significant workload for that program. There will also be an early Fall EQIP sign-up, likely with a window around October for applications.

#### **Partner Reports**

No partners present wishing to report.

#### **Public Comment:**

There was no public present.

#### **Old Business:**

**Water Bank Update** – Craig reported that he and Lorah met with Ron Shultz and Jon Culp from the Conservation Commission. During the discussion the Commission staff explained that they saw two paths forward. One is for the Conservation Commission to hold the water bank agreement with Washington Department of Ecology and conservation districts would be the face of the process reaching out to irrigators and others who wish to either deposit or withdraw water from the bank. The second option is for the Conservation Commission to provide technical support and communication with agency partners while individual conservation districts operate their own individual water banks, processing transfer agreements, and doing all outreach and communication. The board was in agreement and directed Lorah, Albert, and Craig to continue moving forward with a solution that puts the District in control of the Okanogan Ag Water Bank.

#### **New Business:**

**Resolution 2021-04 Emergency Declaration and Need for Expedited Response** – Craig informed that several large wildfires have already burned more than 100,000 acres in Okanogan County this summer and there are still two months of fire activity ahead. Declaring an emergency gives the Executive Director more latitude in working with partners to request assistance and make decisions between board meetings that will free up resources quicker for those affected by wildfire. Albert Roberts moved to adopt Resolution 2021-04 Emergency Declaration and Need for Expedited Response. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Emergency Watershed Protection Request** – Craig informed that the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service implements the Emergency Watershed Protection Program to mitigate post-disaster risks. To activate the program a local or state agency sponsor must request assistance within 60 days of the disaster. In previous years the District has teamed with the Washington State Conservation Commission to request this assistance. Staff recommends the District continue to do so if possible. Lorah Super moved partner with WSCC in requesting post-disaster assistance from the USDA NRCS. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and motion passed unanimously.

**WSCC Proposed Changes to Supervisor Elections Comments** – Craig informed that the Washington State Conservation Commission and Washington Association of Conservation Districts convened a Joint Committee on Elections. The Committee developed four recommendations to improve public participation in conservation district supervisor elections. The supporting document for this decision details the four recommendations. Craig has been participating as a member of the Joint Committee and believes the recommendations are a positive move. Recommend a discussion of the four recommendations during the board meeting and providing me direction on providing comments on behalf of the district. Lorah Super moved to authorize the Executive Director to submit comments as discussed. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and motion passed unanimously.

**WACD Area Meeting Date Selection** – Craig informed that the Okanogan Conservation District is scheduled to host the 2021 WACD North Central Washington Area Meeting. WACD has asked the District to select a date to host the meeting. The District has to select a date within the week starting Monday, October 18, 2021. After discussing with staff, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday would be best. Board suggested WACD NCW Area Meeting for October, 19, 2021.

Ivan Oberg adjourned the meeting at 7:43 PM.

### Summary of Motions

Lorah Super moved to approve the agenda as presented. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Lorah Super moved to approve the July 1, 2021, board meeting minutes as presented. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Albert Roberts moved to approve Treasurer's Report #819. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

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Ivan Oberg  
Chair

Date

  
Craig Nelson  
Executive Director

Date