Okanogan Conservation District

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

TO: The Record
SUBJECT: August 11, 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:

Jerry Asmussen, Vice Chair
Steve Colvin, Supervisor
Phil Dart, Supervisor
Michelle Martin, Supervisor
Bob Clark, Associate Supervisor
Terri Williams, Associate Supervisor
Craig Nelson, Executive Director
Jordana Ellis, Programs Director
Natalie Torres, Administrative Specialist
Emmy Engle, Communications & Outreach Lead
Rosalie Powell, Communications & Outreach Specialist
Emily Bustamante, Education Lead
Eli Loftis, Forests & Wildfire Lead
Celeste Acord, NRCS
Kate Miller, Public

Meeting Call to Order: Jerry Asmussen called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM. He completed a roll call of Supervisors, Associate Supervisors, staff, partners, and the public.

Public Comment:

Approval of Agenda & Consent Approval:

Consent Agenda

A. July 2026 Board Meeting Minutes - Kim
B. FEMA-HMGP Home Hardening Cost-Shares – Eli
C. Methow Valley Ingress/Egress Route Fuels Management – Eli
D. REGENERATE Conference Travel Authorization – Davis
E. August 2026 Treasurer's Report #879

Which covers the checking account activity from July 1, 2026, to July 31, 2026, inclusive. The following checks/payroll/direct withdrawals/electronic payments were approved for payment:

The payroll deposits for this period include two direct deposits: one covering July 1-15, 2026, in the amount of $34,988.71, and another for July 16-31, 2026, totaling $35,016.86. The combined total of payroll deposits is $70,005.57.

Payroll deductions for this period amount to $48,156.65. The HCA payment check (13193) totaled $16,675.16. Altogether, the total payroll-related transactions for this period amount to $134,837.38.

Checks issued during this timeframe include numbers 13194 through 13225. The total claims for checks amount to $111,751.95. Additionally, EFT debits, general ledger adjustments, and credit card payments total $3,303.31. The combined total of claims paid or processed is $115,055.26.

Outstanding expenses remaining total $150,398.11.

The beginning balance of the checking account was $372,789.59. During this period, deposits totaling $358,551.78 were made, and reconciled withdrawals amounted to $345,354.93. After accounting for all transactions, the ending balance in the checking account is $385,986.44.

Steve Colvin made the motion to approve the Agenda and Consent Agenda. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Partner Reports:

Celeste Acord – Celeste provided a brief update on an upcoming CEP deadline and agency reorganization, noting that few changes are expected in Washington State and nonsignificant for the North Central region. She also discussed the anticipated ECP workload through the Farm Service Agency, which will require NRCS inspections. Celeste noted that Okanogan CD has provided ECP inspection support in the past and may have a significant workload ahead in the coming year.

Staff Presentation:

Emily presented an overview of the Education Program to the board, sharing information about current work, initiatives, and future goals.

Phil Dart shared with Emily that her work is reaching and impacting more people than she may realize. He acknowledged that she is already making a meaningful and lasting impact.

Staff Reports:

Craig shared that he met with Washington State Conservation Commission staff to discuss potential funding for post-fire recovery. Commission staff encouraged the District to connect with WACD regarding available wildfire recovery funding.

He also noted that potential WACD resolutions and position statements must be approved by the Board no later than the October meeting. The October 20th Board Meeting will be held at the Elk Lodge.

Finally, Craig provided an update on strategic planning, sharing that staff have reviewed priorities and begun developing goals. The work remains in draft form and will be further reviewed before being brought back to the Board. He noted that staff have had productive conversations throughout the process.

Jordana shared that Ginger from Ecology called on Friday to discuss a potential grant opportunity to support Bonaparte. Ecology is considering Okanogan CD as a potential pass-through for the funding. No decision was requested at this time, but Jordana wanted to make the Board aware of the opportunity.

Rosalie shared that she is planning the District's County Fair booth and invited board members to stop by and engage with community members. She encouraged anyone interested in participating or learning more to contact her by email or phone.
Eli provided an update on technical assistance needs following recent fires, noting approximately $1.1 million in fencing requests affecting more than 11,000 acres of rangeland. He also shared updates from post-fire resource meetings, including the Kaiser BAER team meeting, where fewer than 1,000 acres were identified as having high-severity burns. He noted that resources are limited for some private and state lands.

Eli also discussed that the fires may impact upcoming chipping activities and that requests for forest health and fire resiliency technical assistance have increased.

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

Bonaparte Meadows – Craig brought the acquisition of Bonaparte Meadows Fen by the Okanogan Land Trust before the Board again, asking the Board to reconsider its previous decision not to provide support. He emphasized the ecological importance of the site and its benefits for water regulation, wildlife habitat, and water quality.

Craig also noted that up to $100,000 in SEP funding received through the Kinross settlement may be available to support the acquisition. He proposed providing this funding to the Okanogan Land Trust, with Okanogan CD maintaining a reasonable role in decisions regarding the future of the property. Phil Dart moved to authorize payment of up to $100,000 from the Aquatics and Habitat Fund for the acquisition of the Bonaparte Meadows property and authorized Craig Nelson, acting on our behalf, to work with necessary parties to help effect the acquisition. Steve Colvin seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Water Bank Update – Jordana enthusiastically shared, "We have water!" She noted that the next step is putting it to use by continuing efforts to finalize the Master Trust Water Right Agreement with Ecology. She also provided an update on negotiations for a closing date for the Barkley Irrigation Company acquisition, which remains in progress between legal counsel.

Finally, Jordana shared that website updates have been completed and approved by the Outreach team. Once final approval is received from the Executive Director, the website will be ready to go live.

Succession Planning – Craig introduced two proposed succession plans for initial board feedback at the July meeting. He noted that the plans address succession for board supervisors and the Executive Director. The documents will also be reviewed by Kim and Jordana for additional input.

Board Ethics and Code of Conduct – Craig introduced a new policy for initial board feedback at the July meeting. He noted that the policy is intended to establish shared standards for board members to help maintain the district's integrity and reputation as a trusted organization. The policy will also be reviewed by all the Directors for additional input.

Conflict of Interest - Craig introduced a new Conflict of Interest Policy for initial board feedback. He noted that the policy is intended to help define conflicts of interest for board members and establish how they should be addressed. The policy will also be reviewed by all the Directors for additional input.

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

Resolution 2026-04 Emergency Declaration and Need for Expedited Response – Craig presented a resolution intended to provide staff with the authority to act quickly on wildfire and related disaster recovery efforts, including seeking and accepting funding, entering emergency contracts, and moving necessary processes forward between Board meetings. He noted that the resolution is nearly identical to similar resolutions adopted by the Board in previous years. Phil Dart moved to approve the Resolution 2026-04 Emergency Declaration and Need for Expedited Response. Michelle Martin seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

<u>District Reports: Supervisor Reports</u>

Phil Dart – Phil shared that "this summer sucks," noting the challenges of hauling water to cows and starting the third cutting. He shared that hay is taking around 10 days to dry instead of the usual two, making the season especially difficult. With lightning expected Wednesday night, he has been starting work as early as 4:30 a.m. to get things done before the heat. He also shared that his heart goes out to the ranchers impacted by the fires.

Steve Colvin – Steve shared that the smoke conditions have forced them to shut down. He noted that the red grapes may not last another 10 days under these conditions, while they may still be able to save the white grapes. He shared that the few moments when the air clears enough to breathe are greatly appreciated. Steve said this is the worst smoke they have experienced.

Jerry Asmussen – Jerry shared that he was impacted by the fires and is waiting to learn how severely his soil was affected. He noted he expects to begin feeding livestock about a month earlier than usual. He described the conditions as "dry green," with some grass appearing green but being dry as paper.

Associate Supervisor Reports

Bob Clark – Bob shared that he has been noticing an increase in spiders around his property.

Jerry Asmussen adjourned the meeting at 7:43 PM.

Summary of Motions

Steve Colvin made the motion to approve the Agenda and Consent Agenda. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Phil Dart moved to authorize payment of up to $100,000 from the Aquatics and Habitat Fund for the acquisition of the Bonaparte Meadows property and authorized Craig Nelson, acting on our behalf, to work with necessary parties to help effect the acquisition. Steve Colvin seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Phil Dart moved to approve the Resolution 2026-04 Emergency Declaration and Need for Expedited Response. Michelle Martin seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

9.8.2026

Lorah Super — Date
Chair

9.8.26

Natalie Torres — Date
Administrative Specialist