



Okanogan Conservation District

1251 S. Second Ave, Room 102

Okanogan, WA 98840

TO: The Record
SUBJECT: February 10, 2026; 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	Tanya Margerison, Finance Lead
Jerry Asmussen, Supervisor	Natalie Torres, Administrative Specialist
Steve Colvin, Supervisor	Jordana Ellis, Water Resources Lead
Phil Dart, Supervisor	Sam Nurmi, Forests & Wildfire Planner
Edd Townsend, Supervisor	Emmy Engle, Communication & Outreach Lead
Randy Kelley, Associate Supervisor	Emily Bustamante, Youth Education Lead
Kim Kogler, Programs Director	Celeste Acord, NRCS
	Amber Jackson, ECY

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. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

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

Treasurer's Report #873, which covers the checking account activity from January 1, 2025, to January 31, 2026, (amended to January 1, 2026, to January 31, 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 January 1–15, 2026, in the amount of \$32,882.72, and another for January 16–31, 2025, totaling \$31,927.49. Additionally, two payroll correction checks (13024 & 13025) were issued, totaling \$235.05. The combined total of payroll deposits is \$65,045.26.

Payroll deductions for this period amount to \$51,735.30. The HCA payment check (13026) totaled \$16,592.56, and quarterly payments made during this period amounted to \$6,204.59. Altogether, the total payroll-related transactions for this period amount to \$139,577.71.

Checks issued during this timeframe include numbers 13024 through 13051. The total claims for check numbers 13027 through 13051 amount to \$101,190.37. Additionally, EFT debits, general ledger adjustments, and credit card payments total \$3,546.07. The combined total of claims paid or processed is \$104,736.44.

Outstanding expenses remaining total \$70,956.89.

The beginning balance of the checking account was \$491,084.50. During this period, deposits totaling \$157,512.72 were made, and reconciled withdrawals amounted to \$193,819.47. After accounting for all transactions, the ending balance in the checking account is \$454,777.75.

Tanya Margerison presented the Treasurer's Report #873. Steve Colvin moved to approve Treasurer's Report #873 as amended. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Supervisor Reports:

Jerry Asmussen – Jerry mentioned that that it does not look like February, and the NRCS snow report is showing it will not be a fun summer.

Phil Dart – Phil began with sharing that it is similar to last month, it is too warm and there is not enough snow. Phil mentioned that the last time he saw a winter like this was back in 2014-2015.

Edd Townsend – Edd reported that he attended the Direct Seed Conference in Kennewick, where they discussed soil health at a microbial level. Edd also shared that he has not seen any runoff anywhere; with cattle coming in this year, numbers may be modified.

Steve Colvin – Steve reported that is was 53 degrees with no frost on the ground today. He shared his concern about the current state of the snowpacks.

Lorah Super – Lorah reported that her home outside of Twisp no longer has snow, encouraging her to begin pruning soon. Additionally, Lorah announced that she has made travel plans that will cause her to miss a couple of our future board meetings.

Associate Supervisor Reports:

Randy Kelley – Randy reported that this weather has him working on indoor projects, currently focusing on patching sheet rock.

Staff Reports:

Kim announced that she is currently acting Executive Director while Craig is in Olympia for Legislative Days.

Kim also shared that the House Bill 2499, regarding Supervisor Elections, will not advance.

Jordana announced that she will begin her new position as the district's Programs Director in March.

Jordana shared additional information on behalf of Taylor. Taylor is requesting that the Okanogan Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) Work Group develop a definition of "Agricultural Viability." Okanogan CD staff believe this is essential to the program's effectiveness. Because VSP focuses on protecting critical areas while maintaining and improving long-term agricultural viability, we must first clearly define what agricultural viability means and how it can be measured in Okanogan County.

Staff would value input from the Okanogan CD Board, as this discussion has largely occurred between Commission staff and VSP managers statewide. Staff request that one (no more than two) Board members attend the February 26 VSP Work Group meeting to participate.

All Board members are also encouraged to email Taylor their thoughts on the following:

- What does agricultural viability mean to you as a producer?
- What does it mean for Okanogan County?
- What does success look like in maintaining and improving agricultural viability locally?

NRCS Report

Celeste Acord – Celeste stated that for regular EQIP, applications are currently being prepared for ranking. This year's process differs from previous years, as there is no longer a separate forestry or rangeland funding pool.

She also noted that a pilot program focused on soil health testing (rather than nutrient testing) is available. Interest has primarily come from orchardists. Approximately \$7 million is available statewide. Pest management is ranked as the top priority for local working group funding, largely driven by input from pear growers in Chelan County.

Regarding disaster assistance, Celeste shared that the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program is available, and a sponsor request was submitted in Okanogan County. There is also a separate EQIP disaster program; however, Okanogan County was not included in the state's designated disaster areas.

Partner Reports

Amber Jackson (ECY) – Amber reported that she did not have a partner update to share.

Review, Approve and Sign Contracts and Conservation Plans:

Mac Donough Post Fire Recovery Project Cost-Share - Sam shared that the Mac Donough Forest in East Okanogan County, off Bonaparte Lake Road, was severely burned in the 2021 Walker Creek and Spur Mountain Fires but is naturally regenerating. The landowners want to improve fire safety near their home by reducing hazardously burned trees while supporting forest recovery. The project would involve hand-thinning dead snags near the homesite, retaining safe large snags for wildlife, and burning debris in piles and biochar kilns to limit soil disturbance and emissions. Staff propose supporting the work through a cost-share project totaling \$37,500, with the district covering 75% of the cost (up to \$28,125) using post-fire recovery funds. Phil Dart moved to approve the Mac Donough Post Fire Recovery Project Cost-Share agreement and authorized the Board Chair or Executive Director to sign the finalized agreement. Edd Townsend Seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

DNR Post-Fire Recovery Training and Mazama Flooding TA - Sam reported that DNR's Post-Fire Recovery Program has asked OCD to host a two-day, in-person post-fire assessment training in May or early June 2026. OCD's role would focus on coordinating field logistics, promoting the training with DNR and WSCC, and providing instruction, with Eli Loftis serving as an instructor alongside DNR staff. The project budget is \$30,000, and all work must be completed by June 30, 2026. In addition, the program has offered \$15,000 in extra funding to support OCD staff time addressing Mazama flooding issues through June 30, 2026. Phil Dart moved to approve the agreement between Okanogan CD and the DNR Post-Fire Recovery Program and authorized the Board Chair or Executive Director to sign it once it is available for signature. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

CORRIM Biochar Project 2nd Phase Agreement - Sam said OCD completed its initial CORRIM project on January 31st and CORRIM wants to pursue a longer-term agreement through January 31, 2027, with possible extension tied to its biochar carbon credit program. Due to a potentially shortened burn season, staff may need to quickly coordinate spring biochar demonstrations. Two sites in the Okanogan Highlands have been identified, and a North Cascades Prescribed Burn Association burn is being considered for March or early April. Estimated funding is \$60,000–\$75,000. Phil Dart moved to approve the CORRIM Biochar Project 2nd Phase Agreement and authorized the Board Chair or Executive Director to sign the final contract once it is available. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Classroom in Bloom Foundry10 MOU - Emily shared that Classroom in Bloom received foundry10 funding to deliver a four-week, garden-based curriculum at eight county schools, ending with a farmers market at each site. Okanogan CD staff time, mileage, and printing are included to support teaching the curriculum, and staff will also assist with an on-site teacher training. The project is scheduled for completion by September 30, 2026. Phil Dart moved to authorize Lorah Super to approve and sign the MOU with Classroom in Bloom. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

General Legal Services RFQ - Kim shared that the district needs periodic general legal services and has not had an attorney of record for the past 30 years. Legal support would include reviewing contracts, ensuring policy compliance, and advising on requirements such as the Open Public Meetings Act, Public Records Act, and supervisor elections. Staff propose soliciting legal services for an estimated 6–8 hours per month, with a solicitation to be released in the coming weeks and selection anticipated in March. Edd Townsend moved to authorize staff to solicit for general legal counsel, select a proposed qualified firm, and negotiate a contract for services. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

DNR Interagency Agreement – Transect Monitoring - Kim shared that the agreement would provide DNR with an updated inventory and analysis of rangeland data in Okanogan County by comparing data collected between 1996 and 2019 to assess site conditions and trends. The results will inform management of grazing permits and leases on state trust rangelands. Staff will collect data at 42 study sites during summer 2026, with work occurring from March 1 to September 30, 2026. Total compensation will not exceed \$32,000 and will cover staff time, expenses, mileage, and indirect costs. Phil Dart moved to approve the DNR Interagency Agreement and authorized the Executive Director to sign the agreement once finalized. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Water Bank Update – Jordana reported that the first acquisition is still experiencing a delay. At Ecology’s request, the Okanogan County Water Conservancy Board removed the ROD-ROE from its approval process. Jordana shared that Okanogan CD staff attended a technical assistance meeting with Ecology and Aspect to ensure the revised ROE included all required and complete information to meet Ecology’s review standards. The updated ROE was submitted to the Water Conservancy Board; however, the Board did not have a quorum at that meeting. As a result, the submission must wait until the March meeting, setting the project back an additional month on an already extended timeline.

Jordana also reported that the Barkley acquisition is moving forward. The deed for the water right has been transferred back to BIC. Ecology and BIC are currently working through deed language, specifically Ecology's requirement that, if BIC were to sell the water right in the future, the buyer must enter into an agreement with the Department of Ecology (i.e., the Master Trust Water Right Agreement). The parties are drafting a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) intended to satisfy both sides.

Additionally, Jordana shared that staff are working to finalize the Business and Guidance Document, which will support Ecology in drafting the Master Trust Water Right Agreement for the Okanogan Water Bank. The intent is for Ecology to use language from this document to help move the agreement forward. The planning team hopes to finalize the document this month. Board members interested in reviewing the draft are encouraged to contact Jordana directly.

Conservation Celebration – Emmy shared the 2026 Conservation Celebration will be held April 29 at the Okanogan County Fairgrounds, with Poet Laureate Derek Sheffield confirmed as the keynote speaker. The district will pay a \$250 honorarium for his time, presentation, and travel.

Additionally, Emmy shared that estimated meal costs have increased from the anticipated \$25–\$30 per person to approximately \$35 per person, based on two catering quotes received. Okanogan County Catering offered several buffet-style options, while Smallwood Farms proposed a brisket or pulled pork meal with sides. Both caterers are able to accommodate vegetarian, gluten-free, and dairy-free dietary needs. The Board directed staff to move forward with Smallwood Farms.

Lastly, Emmy presented the award nominees for the 2026 Conservation Celebration. The Board approved the selections and directed Emmy to proceed with the chosen nominees.

New Business:

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

RCW 89.08 Review - Kim shared that WCC and Auditor guidelines recommend the board review the RCW 89.08 Conservation District Act annually. Key sections to focus on include 89.08.200 and 89.08.220 (supervisors' powers and district corporate powers), 89.08.215 (treasurer duties), 89.08.341 (intergovernmental cooperation), and 89.08.070 (commission duties).

Lorah Super adjourned the meeting at 7:03 PM.

Summary of Motions

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

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

Steve Colvin moved to approve Treasurer’s Report #873 as amended. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

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	<u>3/30/26</u>		<u>3/10/26</u>
Jerry Asmussen	Date	Natalie Torres	Date
Vice Chair		Administrative Specialist	