



Okanogan Conservation District

1251 S. Second Ave, Room 102

Okanogan, WA 98840

TO: The Record
SUBJECT: October 3, 2024; Board of Supervisors Meeting
LOCATION: Okanogan Conservation District Office, Okanogan, WA and
Remotely via Microsoft Teams and Teleconference
FROM: Natalie Torres, Administrative Assistant

PRESENT:

Jerry Asmussen, Vice Chair
Phillip Dart, Supervisor
Edd Townsend, Supervisor
Randy Kelley, Associate Supervisor
Bob Clark, Associate Supervisor
Craig Nelson, Executive Director
Becky Drenner, Finance Director
Jordana Ellis, Irrigation Planner
Natalie Torres, Admin. Assistant
Terri Williams, Planner Training Coordinator
Elliot Phillips, NRCS

Dylan Streeter, Wildfire Resiliency & Recovery Planner
Eli Loftis, Wildfire Community & Resiliency Lead
Emmy Engle, Communication & Outreach Specialist
Aaron Wold, Range Planner
Taylor George, VSP Coordinator
Brant Rosenthal Smith, Science Data & Mon. Coord.
Chevelle Yeckel, Water Quality & Riparian Planner
Celeste Acord, NRCS
Rosalie Powell, Communication & Technician Fellow
Emily Bustamante, Education Specialist

Meeting Call to Order: Jerry Asmussen called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. He 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. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Phil Dart moved to approve the September 5, 2024 board meeting minutes as presented. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report #857, which covers the checking account activity from September 6, 2024, to October 3, 2024, inclusive, was presented for the Board's approval. The following checks/payroll/direct withdrawals/electronic payments were approved for payment:

Two direct deposit payrolls, transaction numbers 286 – 300 totaling \$26,352.07 and 354 – 368 totaling \$27,534.85.

Checks – numbers 12549 – 12564 totaling \$40,682.26.

Electronic payments – totaling \$59,610.97.

Deposits totaling \$306,296.66 were made.

Phil Dart moved to approve Treasurer's Report #857 as presented. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Supervisor Reports:

Phillip Dart – Phillip reported an interesting month, noting that haying has concluded, and nighttime temperatures are starting to freeze as fall arrives. He observed that grass is growing well, with more growth now than in July, which is a positive sign. However, a recent windstorm in the Oroville area caused significant damage, requiring repairs to 35 power poles and bringing down several trees onto power lines. Phillip experienced minor roofing damage due to the winds, which reached speeds of 55 mph.

Edd Townsend – Edd reported that conditions are very dry. He spent time on the Jack Wells Fire, which burned about 5,000 acres in just 8 hours. Fireproof fences built after the 2020 Cold Springs Fire should be fine, but others will need repairs. Fortunately, the fire was generally low intensity.

Jerry Asmussen – Jerry reported that he has received slightly more rain than Edd. Cold weather has affected some parts of his garden, but not all. Wildlife activity is increasing, including cougars in the valley, and the Tunk Mountain elk herd, now at 67, is moving closer to the valley.

Associate Supervisor Reports:

Randy Kelley – Randy reported that a friend with an orchard near Tonasket lost about 40 Sugar Bee trees that were all trellised in the recent windstorm. He also noted that Honey Crisp apples are coming up short in harvest number compared to earlier season estimates.

Bob Clark – Bob did not have anything to report.

Staff Reports:

Craig reported that we need to make reservations for the WACD meeting, intending to leave the office at 6:45 AM and return in the late afternoon on October 16. The agenda includes presentations from neighboring agencies, as well as discussions on resolutions. Each district will also share updates on activities in their respective areas.

Additionally, the annual meeting is scheduled for the first week of December in Spokane, featuring training sessions for supervisors. An important item of business will be the vote for a 10-member board, with the Conservation Commission planning to email individual district supervisors to encourage participation in the voting process. On another note, we have posted the Irrigation Technician position and currently have five applicants. The first review for interviews begins tomorrow, October 4, 2024.

Chevelle reported that she is working on a Department of Ecology Centennial Clean Water Fund grant application. While this particular fund source isn't ideal for funneling agricultural producers to address water quality, she is submitting projects from landowners without agricultural operations that are a better fit.

Taylor reported that a Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) Technical Panel tour took place yesterday, with a couple of Okanogan County VSP Workgroup members and landowners at each stop. She highlighted the economic downturn in agriculture and noted that VSP does not count

work on public lands or allow cost-sharing for projects there. Overall, it was a great tour, and she will share photos soon.

Becky reported that she is working with the Washington State Auditor's Office on the scheduled audit for calendar years 2021, 2022, and 2023. She uploaded minutes, agendas, policies, and other requested documents to the Auditor's Office file share site. After reviewing these, they decided to audit payroll, pay raises, and credit card payments during those years. The review of the credit cards has been completed with no concerns, and now they are focusing on pay adjustments. She hopes to hear from the Assistant Auditor tomorrow about scheduling an exit interview.

Eli announced that the public comment period for the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) has closed. A public meeting was held, with four members of the public in attendance. The team intends to process the received comments and provide the final CWPP by the middle of the month.

NRCS Report

Celeste Acord – Celeste reported that there are two positions open in Waterville, with a Range and Forester position expected to be advertised soon. Next year's Local Work Group will be structured differently, with each county holding its own groups before CD supervisors and staff collaborate with representatives from Douglas and Chelan Counties to combine priorities into a final list for NCW.

She also noted that irrigation districts have expressed interest in EQIP funding. Additionally, the office has requested assistance from landowners in the Cedar Creek Fire perimeter affected by debris flows and floods. The deadline for EQIP applications is October 22.

Partner Reports

There were no partners present.

Review, Approve and Sign Contracts and Conservation Plans:

Hackett Forest Health - Dylan presented the project located on Pontiac Ridge in NE Okanogan County, which covers 20 acres of forested land. The property owner expressed concerns about a significant amount of downed woody material and a high density of regenerating Douglas fir trees (less than 1 inch in diameter). To address these issues and reduce fire risk, the plan includes thinning the regenerating trees, currently at 780 trees per acre (TPA), to a target yet to be determined, as well as light thinning of mature trees to bring their density from 230 TPA down to below 222 TPA. A masticator will be used to manage large accumulations of dead wood where feasible. The total estimated project cost is \$23,901.28, with \$17,925.96 funded by the Conservation District, sourced from WSCC Forest Health funds. Dylan noted that the project is following best management practices 384, 649, 660, and 666, and final details of the thinning prescription are still being finalized with the landowner. Phil Dart moved to approve the Hackett Forest Health cost-share contract and authorize Craig Nelson to sign the cost share contract when the final prescription and contract is finalized. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Purchased Services Agreement with 24/7 Maintenance – Dylan presented an update on the collaboration between OCD, the cities of Okanogan and Omak, and 24/7 Property Maintenance to organize mobile chipping events. The events are scheduled for October 28 in Okanogan and November 4-5 in Omak, with 24/7 Property Maintenance responsible for the work at a cost not to exceed \$4,753.65. In Omak, wood chips will be deposited in Eastside Park, while in Okanogan, they will be placed in Legion Park for residential use. Should the chips need to be removed from either location, the cities will handle the removal under the Interlocal Agreements with the district. Phil Dart moved to approve the 24/7 Property Maintenance Purchased Services contract and authorize Craig Nelson to sign it. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Hingepoint Tree Service PSC for Methow Valley Chipping Events - Dylan reported that the district is collaborating with residents in the Lost River, Sun Mountain Ranch Club, Liberty Woodlands, Sky Ranch/Newby Creek, and Kumm Rd. communities to organize mobile chipping events throughout October and early November. The district has contracted Hingepoint Tree Service to carry out these events at a rate of \$210.00 per hour for up to 40 hours, with total payment not to exceed \$8,400.00. Phil Dart moved to approve the Hingepoint Tree Service Purchased Services contract and authorize Lorah Super or Craig Nelson to sign the contract. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Pine Forest Root Rot / Aspen Release Cost-Share - Dylan reported that staff is collaborating with the Pine Forest Homeowners Association (HOA) to implement a root rot treatment and aspen release cost-share project on HOA-owned lands. For the root rot section, all Douglas fir trees within the observable infected area, including a buffer, will be cut and disposed of, affecting approximately 4 acres. The resulting slash will be used to create wildlife habitat piles or will be chipped/burnt. In the aspen release portion, 1.8 acres of aspen stand will see the removal of all ponderosa pine and Douglas fir, with the slash also being turned into wildlife habitat piles. The total best management practice (BMP) cost is estimated at \$8,901.34, with the district contributing up to \$6,676.00 and the cooperator's 25% share estimated at \$2,225.33. Phil Dart moved to approve the Pine Forest Cost-Share agreement and authorize Lorah Super or Craig Nelson to sign the cost-share agreement when finalized. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Chewuch Canal Company (CCC) - Kim reported that the Okanogan Conservation District (CD) seeks to enter a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Chewuch Canal Company (CCC). Both parties aim to collaborate constructively to conserve water and support natural resources. The MOU's purpose is to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each party concerning the Chewuch Canal piping project and related tasks. Specifically, it will outline how the parties will work together to accomplish the piping project and provide mutual support. Phil Dart moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the Chewuch Canal Company and authorize Lorah Super or Craig Nelson to sign the agreement upon reaching final draft form. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Local Drought Preparedness Plan (LDPP) Grant Contract - Kim reported that the Okanogan Conservation District applied for a Local Drought Planning and Preparedness grant from the

Department of Ecology to develop a local drought plan for Okanogan County. This countywide plan aims to identify hardships related to water supply and determine projects that will mitigate risks and enhance resiliency. The Okanogan County Local Drought Planning Project is intended to ensure long-term water security within the communities. Okanogan CD was awarded the grant for a period of 2 years, totaling \$484,122.00, to complete the Local Drought Plan for Okanogan County. Phil Dart moved to approve the Local Drought Preparedness Plan Grant contract and authorize Lorah Super or Craig Nelson to sign the finalized contract. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Conservation Celebration 2025 – Rosalie reported that the Okanogan Conservation District's 2025 Conservation Celebration is proposed for May 7, 2025, at the Okanogan County Fairgrounds, utilizing the Agriplex, annex, and kitchen. The estimated costs include a \$500 rental fee, a \$500 refundable deposit to reserve the space, and an additional \$50 for tablecloths from the facility. Details regarding the event program, keynote speaker, caterer, and schedule are still to be determined. Phil Dart moved to set the date for the 2025 Conservation Celebration for May 7, 2025, and authorize district employees to pay associated expenses and sign agreements to lease the Okanogan County Fairgrounds Agriplex. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Hannah Poush Personal Services Contract – Craig reported that he and Kim Kogler have initiated a project to standardize employee position descriptions across various roles, such as planners, focusing on aligning terminology, responsibilities, knowledge levels, and experience. They have begun this process and plan to review it with other lead staff and eventually present it to the board for approval. Additionally, Craig mentioned that he was recently contacted by Hannah Poush regarding her startup consultation services in organizational leadership, process improvement, and training assessment, among other areas. Having previously collaborated with Hannah through their mutual connection with AgForestry Leadership, Craig has observed her positive impact on organizational development and believes she could provide valuable, neutral insights to enhance the district's overall governance. Phil Dart moved to authorize Craig Nelson and Kim Kogler to negotiate a personal services contract with Hannah Poush to provide key support for district personnel governance. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

UCSRB Contract: Restoring Salmon Habitat through Community Engagement – Emily reported that the Okanogan Conservation District will participate in five community events as part of a project aimed at sharing information about water quality and salmon recovery. Additionally, staff will create an article for both the local newspaper and the Okanogan Conservation District newsletter. They will partner with local libraries to develop afterschool lessons and host a science fair. Furthermore, the project will include a countywide education and outreach initiative, which will feature a bingo sheet, a salmon art contest, and the use of funds to produce Envirothon t-shirts for next year's regional event. The Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB) will provide \$25,000.00 to support this project, which will run from October 2024 to June 30, 2025. Edd Townsend moved to approve the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board outreach contract for \$25,000 and authorize Lorah Super or Craig Nelson to sign it. Phil Dart second the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Walking D Ranch Watering Facility - Aaron reported on The Walking D Ranch, which encompasses 630 acres of shrub steppe divided into three pastures: North, South, and Peters Puddles. The North Pasture is adequately supplied for livestock water by an irrigation pond, while the South Pasture currently relies on a non-functional well due to a broken pump, leading to inconsistent water supply. The ranch aims to support a herd of up to 30 cows, with an estimated daily water requirement of 400 gallons. The primary natural resource concern is the inadequate water supply in the South Pastures, which limits grazing utilization and negatively affects livestock management, resulting in under-utilization of the pastures and reliance on less optimal areas. To address this issue, the proposed project involves installing a solar-powered pump to deliver water through a 60-foot pipeline to a 1,200-gallon trough. The pipeline will be buried below the frost line at a depth of 4 feet, and the trough will be placed on a 6-foot perimeter of 6 inches of crushed rock to create a heavy-use area. The goal of this project is to secure reliable water access for the southern pastures and improve grazing management by enhancing pasture utilization, promoting more sustainable livestock operations, and supporting conservation efforts. Edd Townsend moved to approve the use of up to \$8,787.70 of Natural Resource Investments (NRI) funding for a 75/25 cost-share agreement and authorize Craig to sign the finalized Conservation Practice Data System (CPDS) cost-share contract. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Water Bank Update – Craig shared that there was no news to report on the County Commissioner's progress towards grant for Pine creek. OCD staff has a signed contract from Ecology that includes the tasks for the Barkley acquisition. With this contract in place, we can work acquiring the Barkley water right and on updating our contract with Aspect consulting to include the Barkley tasks. Additionally, OCD staff contacted West Water Research about the valuation process, and they have delivered a draft contract to complete the appraisal for the Barkley water right. Staff will review and coordinate the initiation of that agreement. Look for those contract BDPs at the next Board meeting! Negotiations are proceeding with the first water right seller, and they have proposed a sale price for OCD to consider. The next steps in that process will be determined by the guidance of the OCD Board and Department of Ecology.

New Business:

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

WACD Resolutions – Craig reported that the Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) maintains a process for member conservation districts to propose policies, position statements, recognitions, and studies for consideration by the full membership. This process begins with individual district boards approving proposals to be presented at area meetings. The Okanogan Conservation District is part of the North Central Area, which will meet on October 16. Craig has drafted four proposed resolutions for the board's consideration, addressing scoring for the Community Wildfire Defense Grants, leadership training for conservation districts, wildfire insurance policies, and Conservation Commission grant administration. These resolutions were sent to the board prior to the meeting, along with similar resolutions from the Cascadia (Chelan County) Conservation District. At the area meeting, supervisors can combine

like resolutions, pass only one, amend them, or choose not to pass any. The board has two options for approving the resolutions: they can either move to approve a group of resolutions with a single motion or vote on each resolution individually. Staff strongly recommends that the board vote separately on any resolution they wish to amend to ensure accurate recording of the motions. Phil Dart moved to approve the four WACD resolutions presented at the meeting addressing Community Wildfire Defense Grant scoring, district leadership training, wildfire insurance policies, and Conservation Commission grant administration. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 2024-03 2025 District Board Meeting Schedule - Craig reported that the proposed resolution sets the board meeting schedule for 2025. It establishes that board meetings will occur on the first Thursday of each month, starting at 6:00 PM, at the district office in Okanogan, WA. There are no changes necessary for this year's schedule due to holidays. Phil Dart moved to approve resolution 2024-03 – 2025 District Board Meeting Schedule and authorize Jerry Asmussen to sign it. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Supplemental Environmental Project Letter – Craig reported that the Okanogan Highlands Alliance and the Washington Department of Ecology have settled their lawsuit with Crown Resources Corporation and Kinross Gold U.S.A. regarding water quality violations from the operation of the Buckhorn Mine in NE Okanogan County. The consent decree from the negotiated settlement, filed in federal court, stipulates that Kinross Gold will make three separate \$1 million donations to Trout Unlimited, Okanogan Land Trust, and the Okanogan Conservation District. These funds are intended to support on-the-ground conservation projects that benefit water quality, land, or wildlife habitat in the upper Columbia Basin, north of the confluence of the Okanogan and Columbia Rivers. To receive the funds, the board must authorize Craig Nelson, Executive Director, to submit a "SEP Letter," which confirms that he has been authorized to accept the funds and that the organization agrees to use them as outlined in the consent decree. The use of the funds must comply with the specified requirements. To ensure clarity, the entire consent decree filed in federal court in September has been sent for review. Phil Dart moved to authorize Craig Nelson to sign and submit the Supplemental Environmental Project letter presented tonight and allow staff to accept the funds when donated. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session – Began at 7:35 PM and ended at 7:55 PM.

Jerry adjourned the meeting at 7:55 PM.

Summary of Motions

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

Phil Dart moved to approve the September 5, 2024; board meeting minutes as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

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Lorah Super (Nov 25, 2024 13:36 PST)

11/07/24

Lorah Super
Chair

Date


11/07/24

Natalie Torres
Administrative Assistant

Date