



Okanogan Conservation District

1251 S. Second Ave, Room 102

Okanogan, WA 98840

TO: The Record
SUBJECT: August 7, 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	Natalie Torres, Administrative Specialist
Phil Dart, Supervisor	Jordana Ellis, Water Resources Lead
Edd Townsend, Supervisor	Jack Owen, Water Resources Technician
Ivan Oberg, Associate Supervisor	Eli Loftis, Forests & Wildfire Lead
Randy Kelley, Associate Supervisor	Sam Nurmi, Forests & Wildfire Planner
Terri Williams, Associate Supervisor	Chevelle Yeckel, Aquatics & Habitat Lead
Craig Nelson, Executive Director	Emily Bustamante, Youth Education Lead
Tanya Margerison, Finance Specialist	

Meeting Call to Order: Lorah Super called the meeting to order at 6:02 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. Edd Townsend 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 #867, which covers the checking account activity from July 1, 2025, to July 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, 07/01/2025 – 07/15/2015 totaling \$36,624.97 and 07/16/2025 – 07/31/2025 totaling \$36,483.18.

Two Vacation Buy Outs totaling \$1079.35.

Checks – numbers 12882 - 12903 totaling \$22,610.01.

Electronic payments – totaling \$766,765.86

Deposits totaling \$1,546,563.12 have been made.
Reconciled withdrawals amount to \$1,414,399.32.
Remaining outstanding expenses total \$141,399.75.

Tanya Margerison presented the Treasurer's Report #867. Phil Dart moved to approve Treasurer's Report #867. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Supervisor Reports:

Phil Dart – Phil stated that things are the same as last month. He's received timely rain, and the grass is looking good. Phil shared that cutting begins on Monday; he informed us that this means they will do a fourth cutting, which he is not a fan of. Additionally, Phil shared that the cows also look good. Regarding the fires, Phil said they remained small, approximately 60 acres. Lastly, Phil informed us that a few miles from him, cow trails were washed away, as well as the level of the pond increasing.

Edd Townsend – Edd expressed that he is in the midst of the wheat harvest, commenting on the wide variety of fields he has seen affected by the winter damage, from poor to phenomenal. In comparison to the 6 inches of rain received last fall between October and November, this year, his wheat has received approximately one-fourth of rain. Additionally, Edd shared that while being in the middle of the wheat harvest, he is also fighting fires. For the third year in a row, they've dealt with a fire of their own; the cause remains unknown, as it occurred on the edge of an already cut field. Edd did inform us that the livestock water remains in good shape, considering the amount of rain he's experienced. Edd mentioned there was a rain shower in the morning, though it could not be measured. Lastly, Edd shared he is beginning his third cut tomorrow morning.

Lorah Super – Lorah shared a week ago today that she drove to Spokane and all caught on fire, though upon her return, it rained. Additionally, Lorah announced she attended the Upper Methow Drought Preparedness Community Meeting hosted by Okanogan CD and can confidently say we have some of the best outreach material, especially regarding hybrid meetings. Lorah continued by saying that she has never attended a hybrid meeting where those online have the opportunity to participate just as much as those present.

Additionally, Lorah informed us that she attended a Forest Health Collaborative meeting, where she announced that Eli would now facilitate these meetings, and she would provide support. Furthermore, Lorah announced there is a proposed USDA policy that would require relocation of all Forest Service regional offices. Lorah is interested in learning about the potential impact of this proposed policy.

Associate Supervisor Reports:

Terri – Terri reported that she has been catching up on her farm with her new puppy, where she has begun renting RV lots, a total of 6 customers as of now. Terri also reported that she has initiated work on the climate-smart program, which was originally suspended in February and

then reestablished in June. As well as supporting the creation of the Advancing Markets for producers, with the intent of helping producers in their business planning. Creating scenarios, *“If we do this, then that.”* Producers may have the option of reimbursement for completing this program. Terri emphasized that she is focusing on becoming familiar with tools to support the producers in strengthening the business plan model.

Randy Kelley – Randy stated he had nothing to add.

Ivan Oberg – Ivan stated he had nothing to add.

Staff Reports:

Craig reported that the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) has still not provided funding for Sustainable Farms & Fields or the Riparian Grant Program (RGP). This has ultimately caused staff to charge expenses to available funds, such as the Implementation (IM) grant. The IM budget has already been greatly impacted, limiting the work that can be done over the next 11 months. Craig noted that while some funding has been appropriated and additional dollars may become available, the Commission has not provided clear information on overall requests or allocations. Districts are expected to receive less than they applied for, and there is uncertainty about how funds will be distributed. Currently, work that should be moving forward cannot be charged to expenses, creating a risk of losing the implementation window—unless contractors are idle and waiting. Managers are reaching out to Commission staff, urging them to review grants and provide at least a small preparatory grant amendment. This would allow dollars to be added to an existing task or grant with a simple one-page memo. While this process has not yet been used, it may be the most practical option. Craig shared this update because funding is tighter than expected, with new applications still pending. If the additional dollars come through, 2026 could look very different. Historically, long-standing programs have always been able to charge expenses starting July 1, even if vouchers aren’t signed until later. This has been the practice for 14 biennia, but delays this time are creating real challenges.

Additionally, Craig shared that Okanogan CD will be co-hosting a forest health tour with the Methow-Okanogan Beaver Program. The Washington State Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee will be participating, with Senator Short serving as Craig’s point of contact after expressing interest earlier this year. While details are still being finalized, the tour is expected to begin in Twisp or Winthrop and conclude by crossing the Loup into the Omak-Okanogan area. Craig encouraged board members to attend if possible and noted that neighboring CD managers will also be invited.

Lastly, Craig informed the board the announcement for the Finance Lead has officially been posted. The first review of applicants will occur on August 20th and interviews will follow on August 26th.

Chevelle shared that Okanogan CD has made the final offer list for the ECY ’26 grant and is now in the process of negotiating the agreement. The grant work will include collaborating with

tribal staff on stream remediation, implementing riparian restoration at Chesaw, and conducting maintenance at Antoine Valley Ranch.

Eli shared that he has been having conversations about potential funding sources. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Urban and Community Forestry Program (UCF) has connected with him regarding possible future projects once funding becomes available, with the goal of building relationships now. Frank Curtain with American Forests expressed interest in post-fire restoration and reforestation work on a larger scale, particularly in the Wauconda area. NetGeo Quorum also has Forest Service funding for biochar films and has been in discussions with CDs about the potential for a large-scale biochar program. Non-governmental organizations are noticeably stepping in, and it remains to be seen how these opportunities develop.

Eli also noted that technical assistance (TA) requests are coming in from the most recent fires. For example, there is a pending request related to the Stud Horse Mountain Fire covering about 20 acres, where the landowner and neighbors will be involved.

Jordana shared that the drought meetings are going well. The Methow meeting had over thirty attendees, while the Upper Okanogan meeting saw a smaller turnout. She thanked the board members who attended and expressed appreciation to Emmy Engle and Rosalie Powell for their behind-the-scenes work in preparing for the meetings. Jordana also acknowledged Rosalie for facilitating the online portion of the meetings. Additionally, she highlighted the contributions of Brant Smith and Jack Owen for developing a map exercise, which has been a valuable component of the sessions. Overall, she noted that the community response has been positive, with strong engagement and participation.

Lastly, Jordana informed the board that funding for the Irrigation Efficiencies (IE) program has been awarded. While the amount is comparable to last year's allocation, it is less than what was requested.

Emily shared that she and Kim had been coordinating and developing educator group meetings and newsletters among Conservation Districts, supported by a \$10,000 award from the WSCC. Although they had planned to continue this work, funding was not awarded this year, and the WSCC will be taking the lead moving forward.

NRCS Report

There were no NRCS members present.

Partner Reports

There were no partners present.

Review, Approve and Sign Contracts and Conservation Plans:

Personal Services Contract with Jeff Yeckel - Chevelle reported that the Okanogan Conservation District had previously hired Larry Mawdsley, under a Department of Ecology-

funded grant, to provide boat transportation for water quality monitoring at Palmer Lake. After completing trips in May and June, Larry became unavailable. The district now proposes hiring Jeff Yeckel to take over the role from July to October 2025. Jeff has already completed the July trip and will handle three more monthly outings. His contract will not exceed \$2,000 and will end on November 30, 2025, matching the grant's timeline. Phil Dart moved to approve the Personal Service Contract with Jeff Yeckel and authorized Lorah Super or Craig Nelson to sign the contract and approve a retroactive payment for services provided in July 2025. Edd Townsend Seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

State Envirothon Host Site for 2026 - Emily shared that Okanogan Conservation District has been asked to host the 2026 State Envirothon in May. The Washington State Conservation Commission will provide \$10,000 in funding through an addendum to support the event, covering eligible costs like staff time, mileage, venue, and materials. Expenses such as meals, awards, and t-shirts are not covered by the Commission but will be funded by the State Envirothon Committee. Edd Townsend moved to approve hosting the 2026 State Envirothon and approved the addendum and authorized Lorah Super or Craig Nelson to sign once the addendum is received from the Washington State Conservation Commission. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Water Bank Update – Jordana shared that the Hover Water Right Change Application is progressing with the Okanogan County Water Conservancy Board, with a site visit by board members scheduled for Thursday, August 21st. The next step in the process is the Report of Examination (ROE), currently being drafted by Aspect and expected to be ready for the September Water Conservancy Board meeting. She also noted continued delays from the Department of Ecology in providing the first draft of the Master Trust Water Right Agreement, which is required before any water banking activities can begin. Despite repeated assurances that it is a priority, no timeline has been provided. Okanogan CD offered to have its contractors, Aspect and Confluence Law, draft the agreement, but Ecology declined. Jordana also reported that negotiations have begun with Barkley Irrigation Company (BIC), which has requested to work directly with Okanogan CD without legal representation for now. A recent meeting between members of the Craig family initiated this discussion, and Okanogan CD staff, Supervisor Super, Aspect, and Confluence are developing negotiation points for the next conversation. Finally, there is still no word from Ecology on the Pine Creek grant. The public survey is live on the Okanogan CD website, with seven responses received so far.

New Business:

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

WACD Resolutions – Craig explained that Foster Creek Conservation District will host the WACD North Central Area Meeting in October, where resolutions may be introduced by conservation districts or members. Resolutions usually focus on funding, agency policy, or legal changes. The

standard process begins with local CD approval, followed by presentation at the Area Meeting. If passed, resolutions move to the WACD Annual Meeting, and federal-related ones may proceed to the National Association of Conservation Districts. Discussion typically starts in August or September, with final approval in October. At the moment, Craig recommended the board be prepared to discuss potential resolutions.

Lorah Super adjourned the meeting at 7:41 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 board meeting minutes as amended. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Phil Dart moved to approve Treasurer's Report #867. Edd Townsend seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Phil Dart moved to approve the Personal Service Contract with Jeff Yeckel and authorized Lorah Super or Craig Nelson to sign the contract and approve a retroactive payment for services provided in July 2025. Edd Townsend Seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Edd Townsend moved to approve hosting the 2026 State Envirothon and approved the addendum and authorized Lorah Super or Craig Nelson to sign once the addendum is received from the Washington State Conservation Commission. Phil Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.



Lorah Super
Chair

9/15/2025

Date



Natalie Torres
Administrative Assistant

9/18/25

Date